

Initiative for more Climate Ambition

Declaration, November 2018

1. Climate change is the key challenge of our time. Our generation is the first to experience the rapid increase in temperatures around the globe and probably the last to effectively combat an impending global climate crisis.
2. The effects of climate change are well documented and are felt everywhere around the globe: The dramatic increase in heat waves, floods, droughts and mudflows, glacial melting and sea-level rise. Water shortages and crop failures are only some of the immediate results, with devastating impacts such as hunger and forced human displacement. We have felt the immediate effects as recently as this summer, including in Europe: Heat waves and scorching fires from Greece to the Arctic Circle claimed the lives of dozens of women, men, and children while eradicating the livelihoods of many others.
3. Over the past century, the global average temperature has already risen by about 1 degree Celsius over pre-industrial levels. This increase is unprecedented in the history of mankind.
4. The climate crisis is a concern to all of us. Global warming impedes the global economy. It threatens various sectors including agriculture, forestry, tourism, energy and water supplies and inevitably, it is a serious threat to peace and stability around the globe.
5. Three years ago, on 12 December 2015, the world witnessed a great moment of hope and confidence: At COP 21, the global community adopted a landmark agreement – the Paris Agreement – with the goal of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change by holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. As a part of the agreement reached in Paris, COP 21 invited the IPCC to prepare a Special Report on limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
6. Three years later, ahead of COP 24 in Poland, the assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is clear: The IPCC report on the impact of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius unequivocally confirms that we are already seeing the negative impacts of climate change; it also clearly demonstrates the vulnerabilities, impacts and risks of further global warming to human societies and natural systems, including the attainment of sustainable development and of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

7. Current measures taken by the international community, as expressed in nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement, are not sufficient to reach the long-term goals set out in the Paris Agreement. More has to be done – and action needs to be quick, decisive and joint.
8. We, the Heads of State and Governments signing this Declaration, are convinced that effective measures to combat climate change are not only necessary in their own right, but will bring about additional co-benefits and new opportunities for our economies and societies. We are confident that substantial measures will help us lead our planet into a safe, peaceful and prosperous future.
9. COP 24 in Poland carries a particular responsibility. In Katowice, Parties will agree on the rules under the Paris Agreement. This relates not only to NDCs set for 2025 and 2030, but also to the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, which are a shared commitment of all Parties of the Paris Agreement with a perspective of achieving a global low carbon and climate resilient transition from fossil energy sources to renewables, and achieving a balance between emissions and sinks by the second half of the century.
10. Based on the scientific and technical expertise as well as the financial means the world has today, we collectively have the obligation towards future generations to do everything humanly possible to stop climate change as well as to adapt to its adverse effects.
11. We appeal to the International Community and to all Parties to the Paris Agreement: Let us act jointly, decisively, and swiftly to stop the global climate crisis.
12. We call for a successful outcome at COP 24 in Katowice that will bring the Paris Agreement to life through the adoption of detailed operational rules and guidelines on all elements in the Paris Agreement Work Programme.
13. We urge all Parties to engage constructively in the Talanoa Dialogue process and to revisit their NDCs in light of the findings of the IPCC Special Report, with a view to updating their respective NDCs by 2020 and thereby raising global ambition to meet the climate challenge.
14. We further urge all Parties to formulate and communicate by 2020 at the latest mid-century, long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies, mindful of the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement as well as the SDGs.
15. Let us take the manifold opportunities and measures to combat climate change forward and shape a positive future for our planet.
Let us bequeath a world worth living in to our children and to future generations.

Alexander Van der Bellen
Federal President of the Republic of Austria

Nicos Anastasiadis
President of the Republic of Cyprus

Sauli Niinistö
President of the Republic of Finland

Emmanuel Macron
President of the French Republic

Frank-Walter Steinmeier
Federal President of the Republic of Germany

Prokopios Pavlopoulos
President of the Hellenic Republic

Janos Áder
President of the Republic of Hungary

Guðni Th. Jóhannesson
President of the Republic of Iceland

Michael D. Higgins
President of Ireland

Sergio Mattarella
President of the Italian Republic

Raimonds Vējonis
President of the Republic of Latvia

Dalia Grybauskaitė
President of the Republic of Lithuania

Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa
President of the Portuguese Republic

Borut Pahor
President of the Republic of Slovenia

Alain Berset
President of the Swiss Confederation

Lars Løkke Rasmussen
Prime Minister of Denmark

Mark Rutte
Prime Minister of the Netherlands

Pedro Sánchez Perez-Castejón
Prime Minister of Spain

Stefan Löfven
Prime Minister of Sweden