

## **Joint Op-Ed by HRVP and EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete on the occasion of the April 22nd signature of the Paris COP agreement**

### **Signing on to a more secure and stable world**

The signing of the Paris Agreement in New York on 22 of April was a historic event and an important step towards implementing the world's first global climate deal.

A record number of countries signed the Agreement: the whole world was committed to turning the promises we made in Paris into concrete action. The Paris spirit is alive and well – and moving forward.

In the past years we had listened to so many gloomy predictions that a universal agreement would be impossible to achieve. Indeed, there were strong reasons for being sceptic. But our faith in diplomacy and multilateral cooperation has paid off. And we must say out loud that Europe has played a crucial role in creating consensus around a 195 countries-strong deal.

In the run up to the Paris climate conference, our Union mobilised its network of 3,000 EU delegations and Member State embassies across the globe. This dialogue with our partner countries, the general public, the business community and civil society organisations has helped us build a global coalition to fight climate change. This is European diplomacy at its very best: working together for the good of Europe and the whole world.

During the conference, Europe was a strong voice for ambition. Our climate diplomacy set up a network of alliances with the group of 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. We engaged with both big players and smaller developing countries to aim for the highest level of ambition. This now famous High Ambition Coalition was the game changer in Paris.

And our work goes on. Paris was just the beginning. Building on the successful alliances we made in the run up to and during Paris will be crucial: we will need each other's help to keep on track towards a global clean energy transition. That is the only way to limit global warming to well below 2°C and limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.

Global temperatures have reached record levels. The impact of climate change continues to threaten lives and destabilise entire regions. Collective action worldwide is more vital than ever.

Desertification and drought foster mass movements of people, spread epidemics and create conflicts for the control of resources. Climate change is already a foreign policy issue: it affects our security right now, not in a distant future.

Tackling this global threat must continue to be at the heart of the European external action – all 28 EU foreign ministers have agreed on that. Addressing the direct and indirect security effects of climate change will be an important part of the new EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy to be presented to the European Council next June.

It is a complex threat, but we already have many of the tools we need to address climate fragility and limit risks to peace. Our partners in the G7 are also working hard to identify concrete areas for action. And yet our strategies on climate change, development, humanitarian aid and peace building issues need to be more strongly integrated. All our policies must keep an eye on climate change issues, as suggested by the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

When time is short and financial resources are limited, we cannot afford duplications and inconsistencies. National climate adaptation programmes could identify and promote the co-benefits and synergies with other areas, such as economic and social development, health, environment, and also peace.

Our priority now is to go for an early ratification and entry into force of the Paris Agreement. This would send an important signal to the world: European governments are serious about climate change, and we will put into practice what was agreed on paper.

For the same reason we cannot lose any time in bringing into play the climate action plans we prepared in advance of Paris. We will support our partners across the world as they prepare for implementation, and we will keep engaging with non-State actors such as businesses, cities and many others. Everyone has to play their part in the collective global effort ahead.

It is time to get down to the hard work of delivering on the Paris' promises. We will need the same ambition and shared sense of direction which brought about the deal. Our Union will keep leading the way – as it has always done – towards a greener and safer planet.