POLICY **BRIEF**

GLOBAL POLITICAL TRENDS CENTER (GPoT)

CLIMATE REALITY: A CHALLENGE PUSHING THE COUNTRIES TO COOPERATE

KATARÍNA **HAZUCHOVÁ**

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ABSTRACT Climate change poses the greatest challenge for countries, acting as a threat multiplier with potential to affect security and stability in regional and global merit. Climate negotiations have long been seen as an effective tool for countries facing climate change, because it enables them to negotiate according to their respective responsibilities and capabilities. Working on these assumptions, the developed and developing countries' evolution under the climate change threats have resulted in a wide spectrum of national strategies, and binding and voluntary commitments, which many times not only insufficiently address climate change but more importantly do appear ineffective when it comes to the climate reality. The fifth assessment report of the respected scientific body the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change has given a last warning to the assessment of countries' approaches towards the issue. Also, it has appeared to be a challenge for cooperation between countries in regional merit. So what are the challenges and opportunities that countries face in the wake of climate change?

Common Challenges

Europe and Turkey face several common challenges in their efforts to cope with the climate change. Both EU and Turkey are members of the Organization for European Co-Operation and Development (OECD), which altogether historically accounts for the greatest amount of emissions. EU is rather a *sui generis* entity in energy related issues, and is highly dependent on import of energy and resources. Turkey on the other hand is in the developing countries group, yet having an emerging economy with current levels above the OECD average as well as fast growing population and energy intensity.

With respect to climate change, both are facing challenges in terms of common political and institutional framework, diversification of energy resources, including the renewable energy and energy efficiency (see e.g. Avcı, 2013).

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Since the international climate change regime[1] evolved after the Cold War, the EU and Turkey's climate policies formation and strategies have been formed under different circumstances. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted in 1992, categorized countries globally into broad categories of Annex I and Annex II countries. In other words, it divided countries between developed or industrialized countries, and developing countries, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Thanks to its location in the Mediterranean basin, Turkey is especially vulnerable to impacts of climate change, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).[2] This fact combined with other OECD indicators, for instance GDP per capita, emissions profile or ranking in the Human Development Index placed Turkey into the developing countries group, though with special circumstances.[3]

Despite of that Turkey finally ratified Kyoto Protocol in 2009, it did not place an additional burden on Turkey. However, as an Annex I country, it has not been eligible for Joint Implementation credits nor can it host Clean Development mechanisms projects.

Current policy settings in countries are based on binding pledges mostly for developed countries and voluntary pledges for developing countries under the multilateral climate regime composed from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Kyoto Protocol.

Following the international provisions, particularly of UNFCCC, Turkey was initially included among the Annex II countries. Three years before Turkey became a party to UNFCCC, in 2001 it was removed from Annex II countries and was appointed Inter-Ministerial Coordination Board on Climate Change. In fact, Turkey undertook an overall institutional structuring. Diversified representation of stakeholders seems to pay attention to cooperation on inter-ministerial level, also not leaving behind the business sector.[4] Moreover, Turkey as a "middle income developing country" has been benefiting from respective technology and financial support according to the adopted Decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.[5]

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[1] Climate regime is here defined as the set of international, national and sub-national institutions and actors involved in addressing climate change (Levin, K., Joffe, P., & Moncel, R. (2013) .

[2] For more on this issue, see Climate Change Strategy 2010-2020 (2010).

[3] In 1992 Turkey was listed in both Annex I and Annex II to UNFCCC.

[4] A key role was played by the private sector Technology Development Foundation of Turkey (TTGV), working in co-operation with Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF), Turkey and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), by managing funds provided under the Multilateral Fund to assist industry with Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) phase-out.

[5] For detailed information, see United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Provisions under climate change regime for Turkey (2011).

Clean Development mechanisms projects. Therefore, it has been a strong motivation for Turkey to explore possibilities for acquiring additional financial and technical support for climate change activities within the international community (OECD, 2008, pp. 182 - 189).[6]

Given the global "increase in energy intensity" trend[7] and the ambition in doubling both the share of renewable energy and the global rate improvement in energy efficiency, there is a growing need both in the EU and in Turkey for diversification of the energy mix (International Energy Agency, 2013). There is nothing new that energy decisions made today will largely determine the energy mix in year 2030. Therefore transition towards greater share of renewable energy (RES) in the mix and increasing energy efficiency is considered an ambitious challenge for both regions (Hürriyet, 2 November 2013).

The EU has its own experience with energy transition during the economic recession. Germany is recognized as a pioneer in transition from fossil fuels towards low-carbon economy with "Energiewende" (literary "energy transition"). While the EU's energy transition is motivated by the 2020 strategy[8], including share of RES, emission reduction and energy efficiency, not all member states are on a track to achieve this ambition. The proceedings of member states are not always balanced due to these states' different regulatory regimes, subsidies to RES, distinct stages of national market liberalization processes and other factors.

In contrast, Turkey strengthened its economy since it became a party to the UNFCCC. The National Climate Change strategy, adopted for the period of 2010-2023, is setting sector specific targets, including an ambition to triple renewable energy to 30% of the energy mix by 2023 (Copenhagen Cleantech Cluster, 2013)

It is important to notice that both the EU's and Turkey's strategies are following one noble global objective to keep emission levels under the globally agreed threshold, globally agreed of two degree Celsius by 2020.

Although it seems that strategies both in EU and Turkey gathered momentum towards achievement of this objective, the climate policies and overall climate change status is hardly satisfactory. As an illustration, the results from Climate Change Performance Index 2013 ranked Turkey into a very poor status. The results from other European countries vary, but we can talk about Denmark, Sweden and Portugal only in good terms. Similarly, with regards to climate policy countries like Turkey, Greece and Spain are in the worst terms in contrast to other European countries (Burck, Hermwille, & Krings, 2012).

Taking into consideration a changing global "atmosphere", even the two-degree target has only a temporary character (see e.g. Geden, 2013). Much has changed in the world since the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997. States' sovereign interests, emerging markets and rapid population growth, currently

[6] Turkey was deleted from Annex II and placed, after becoming a party, in situation different from that of other parties listed in Annex I to the Convention.

[7] According to the International Energy Outlook 2013, world energy consumption will grow by 56 percent between 2010 and 2014.

[8] For more information on 2020 strategy see European Commission 2013.

exceeding a 7 billion[9], is likely to cause a doubling of energy consumption globally by the end of this century. Some headlines in the climate change arena have significantly contributed towards a shift in thinking of climate change from new perspectives (for more on this topic see e.g. Benhabib et al., 2013).

This picture describes a transition to some contemporary paradigm shifts, where in the near future it will be needed to assess the trajectories of respective countries towards climate change objectives under new circumstances.

In September 2013, the respected scientific body IPCC released its' fifth assessment report, six years after the previous report has been released in 2007. The verdict was: Man-made climate change is a reality – the influence of human activity on the climate is clear. During the last 800 000 years scientists have not observed such high levels of greenhouse gases. Moreover, CO_2 concentrations exceeded the 400 parts per million. Results have been surprising and dramatic. In contrast to 90 percent consensus six years ago, contemporary scientific certainty is more than 95 percent convinced of human influence over global warming (Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, 2013).

Consequently, another World Meteorological Organization report, released immediately after the IPCC's verdict, confirmed that during last two decades there was a 32 percent increase in the warming of our planet (so called radiative forcing), because of carbon dioxide (CO_2) and other heat trapping gases originating mainly from fossil fuels (World Meteorological Organization, 2013).

This is just an illustration of the sequence of reports released in 2013, after scientific consensus have been achieved, and there is no wonder that it contributed to a chaotic atmosphere between the countries at the 9th meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol. Over the past 15 years, since the Kyoto Protocol was agreed in 1997, several developed countries have been using past IPCC findings to declare that the Earth is on a track leading to dramatic changes, and nowadays we see that it was insufficient to persuade developing countries to greater voluntary emission cuts.

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Understandably, developing countries do not want to take responsibility in terms of unilateral action for their rapid contribution to emissions. Preferentially, the solution would be common global agreement where pledges would be equal for all the countries in a Globe. In other words, the developing countries do not want to be punished for their emissions but it would be preferential to have some benefits if they act responsively. But there is also another factor beyond this concern.

[9] According to the World Population Statistics 2013, the current world population in 2013 is 7,118,279,573.

Most of the developing countries are particularly prone to effects of climate change due to their geographic location. This description was evident on negotiations in Warsaw, where the countries that are most exposed to extreme weather events (Philippines and Typhoon Haiyan) demanded their voices to be heard. The debate about climate change has been postponed towards 2015 when all the countries around the globe will be negotiating in Paris a new global agreement.

In this respect, when we are looking ahead to the climate negotiations, at least in the Copenhagen Conference in 2009 it was clear that there is an increasing gap between developed and developing countries and that many factors are beyond states' concerns. It was understood that there is good to have some kind of dialogue. International community started to talk about the role of so called minilateral fora in the climate change arena. The impetus for this was the successful outcome of Cartagena Dialogue, which was described by Mose Naím (2009) as the coordination among smallest possible number of countries needed to solve a particular problem towards action.

The success in Cartagena raised expectations on that the climate change agenda can be moved forward more efficiently through various minilateral fora like G20. But results of a G20 summit in St. Petersburg confirmed that climate change agenda is not at all their primary objective, even though climate change is something which cannot be easily ignored. In this respect, at this summit, the G20 countries reiterated their commitments and signed agreement to the Montreal Protocol on other long-life pollutants than CO_2 (see e.g. Yeo, 2013).

From this short picture it is clear how interdependent and complex the climate change issue is. The Kyoto Protocol has been extended, but it shall be replaced by new global agreement. It means that the current settings for countries originating from Kyoto are more likely to change according to new rules. Therefore, the post-2015 framework will more likely represent a new start in evolution of climate change.

There is not only future global agreement that might face unease, but the whole multilateral system is also facing difficulties. The stabilization of the multi-lateral system has been one of the Russian priorities during their presidency in G20.There are increasing talks about reforming of the whole multilateral system, not leaving behind discussions about a UN Security Council reform, where the climate change has its special place (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2013).

Coming back to regional settings, energy security is another challenge for both EU and Turkey that is worth mentioning. In 2008, EU adopted the climate and energy package, which aligned the energy security issues with global de-carbonization agendas. External dimensions of EU climate change policy have been strengthened through European Union External Action (EEAS) and its neighborhood policy. Regional cooperation has been developed in this respect through flagship initiatives of the EU's position on resource security. The 2011 Communication and Resource-efficient Europe is one of the flagships of the Europe 2020 strategy, which calls for greater international cooperation. EU's legislation is in this respect guided by Energy Efficiency Directive, which sets specific measures for individual sectors

and products. The challenge in this respect is to create the common political, institutional framework with aim to develop the integration of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in the region (European Commission, 2013)

Summary

The fifth IPCC's assessment report and the Warsaw conference in 2013 have led to a critical reassessment of the countries' policies towards the climate change. Unfortunately, increasing CO_2 concentrations in the atmosphere, mainly due to growing economies and increased energy consumption that come mostly from fossil fuels, reminded us how little these policies had achieved. Much has been discussed about the potential role of energy efficiency and renewable energy as effective tools in transition to low carbon economy. Despite of that Turkey is an OECD member with the historic responsibility for greenhouse gases, it has special circumstances due to its geographic position in the Mediterranean basin. The new paradigm shift in climate change is slowly placing developing countries into the binding process since all developing countries, including rapid growing economies; significantly contribute to the increase of global greenhouse gases. Turkey, a country in developing position is facing several challenges ahead to keep a pace with the European 2020 strategy, while accomplishing its voluntary commitments set up for 30% from renewable energy for 2023 and other objectives as part of the National Climate Change Strategy. Moreover, with the current climate policy and pollution it will be necessary to raise more ambition since there is a projected rapid increase in population and energy consumption. European Union is facing a hard situation as one of the champions in the climate change arena to continue with its efforts to counter climate change also in international negotiations and under circumstances like multilateral instability and geopolitical shifts. However, both sides have a strong incentive-energy to help to move the climate change agenda forward and through improvements in energy efficiency and share of renewable energy in order to help decrease current unprecedented levels of greenhouse gases. This common goal could give an impetus for regional cooperation given the fact that climate change cannot be solved unilaterally any longer.

KATARÍNA **HAZUCHOVÁ**

Katarína Hazuchová MA, is an independent environmental analyst and publisher. She completed her Masters studies at Comenius University in Bratislava at the Faculty of Environmental Sciences in 2001. Among others, she has hold positions at the Department of the EU and Environmental Policies of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic (previous department of International Relations and Protocol) as well as at the Water Research Institute (WRI) of the Slovak Republic where she worked at the Department of Water Management Concepts and Planning. In November 2012 she was certified by International Academy for Leadership on Climate Change and Resource Management in Germany and in June 2013 she obtain training as a Climate Leader and Presenter in the Climate Reality Project by Chairmen and former American Vice-President Al Gore. Her main research interests include the dual relationship between the political decisions and the global environmental and climate changes.

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CONTACT **DETAILS**

Global Political Trends Center (GPoT)
Istanbul Kültür University
Atakoy Campus, Bakirkoy
34 156 Istanbul, Turkey

www.gpotcenter.org
info@gpotcenter.org
Tel: +90 212 498 44 76/65
Fax: +90 212 498 44 05

GPoT
Global Political Trends Center
Istanbul Kültür University