



31 March 2014. Climate change will be on the agenda in the UN Secretary-General's visit to Brussels 1-3 April.

In addition to meetings with EU officials and European leaders, Ban Ki-moon will give a speech called „On the Road to Paris 2015: Towards a new Global Climate Deal“ at the Friends of Europe in Brussels. His speech comes shortly after the European Council post-poned to the autumn to fix its targets for CO2 emission cuts. It also follows his visit to Greenland last week, which was aimed at building momentum ahead of the Climate Summit which he is convening at the UN General Assembly on 23 September.

One of Ban Ki-moon's interlocutors in Brussels this week is Connie Hedegaard, the European Commissioner for Climate Action. She talked to the UNRIC website last week.



*First she was asked about her hopes for the outcome of the upcoming climate summit: “I really hope that the Secretary-General's intention will bear fruit in the sense that, first of all, leaders should attend the summit. I hope it will help them to tune their brains into climate again, but I also hope that there could be some leaders of big emitter nations that would come out and would*

say what they want to do after 2020 because that is what we need for the Paris conference 2015.

So that would be one good outcome and another good outcome would be that we would move forward on some of the financing things, see where there are alternative financing models. We say that we want to phase out fossil fuel subsidies in the world and maybe we would agree to that how exactly this would be done. So there are many things in the pipeline where I hope Ban Ki-moon's Climate Summit could give 2 or 3 very good signals that there is political will from that highest political level now to be serious about climate change."

*Some have expressed disappointment on the outcome of the recent EU Summit, where discussions on the Ukraine overshadowed Climate Change.*

"For understandable reasons our leaders had to discuss what to do with what is happening in the Ukraine but in a way, I think that when after that they discussed our climate and energy targets for 2030, it did not harm that discussion that they had just sort of realized the extent of our political dependency on importing fossil fuels from Russia. Normally we talk about it in economic terms, how much it costs. It costs us more than one million Euros every day, year in year out, to pay for our imported fossil fuels from outside. In recent weeks we have seen more than most people would like what the political costs of energy dependency are. So I think that it was in a sense, one more wake-up call and maybe that also led to the outcome, mainly that our leaders unanimously agreed that at the latest, this October, they will agree on all the different targets for 2030: renewables, efficiency, what to happen with CO2 reductions and the emission trading scheme, energy dependency – all of it will have to be adopted in half year from now. It is not a bad outcome, it is a strong outcome."

*Regarding a climate deal in Paris 2015: Inevitably the focus is on the emerging economies, that have not yet been bound by emission cut due to their status as developing countries. Will this debate be an obstacle to progress on the issue? „ I hope that we do not need to continue this classical north-south discussion. Some will have to do things because it is an obligation, others will have to do it voluntarily. All of us have to pursue more climate friendly growth strategies and development strategies. It is not a punishment here to do something, but a question of the opportunities of the future. Of course those who are rich, developed and industrialized already, they will have to do more, sooner than those who have not, but all of us have to make our fair contribution."*

*Photo: Commissioner Hedegaard talked to UNRIC staff and interns about climate change last week. UNRIC/Philippe Chabot.*