



European Commission - Speech [Check Against Delivery]



Opening remarks by Commissioner Hoekstra at the first COP28 EU press conference, together with the Spanish Presidency

Dubai, 6 December 2023

Ladies and gentlemen,

a very good afternoon to all of you.

I'm really happy to be here with all of you at COP28.

Because this feels like the moment we've all been waiting for and working towards.

Ever since the Paris Agreement, we have had a goal in mind,

a temperature limit that we must not pass,

for the sake of our lives and those of next generations.

Our work this year is off to a good start.

The agreement on the loss and damage fund, the pledges – now a total of more than half a billion dollars – and of course the swift adoption of the agenda, basically all set a positive tone as we close this first week.

But make no mistake, there is still a lot of work ahead of us in the days to come.

COP28 is the moment to take stock of the Paris Agreement.

The science is crystal clear.

I have repeatedly said it and I'm going to repeat it here.

We have no alternative than to follow what scientists tell us.

And they are telling us we're simply not on track.

They are telling us that we need to accelerate our emissions reductions, and we need to do it this decade.

Ladies and gentlemen,

the European Union is here to negotiate an outcome to the Global Stocktake that sets a higher bar.

We know what is needed, and we know that we need to move faster.

The world must peak emissions by 2025 at the latest and achieve 43% emissions reductions by 2030.

And we must also look to 2035, look further ahead and prepare the ground for the next round of NDCs.

The crux of the matter, the thing we are of course all talking about, is the phase-out of fossil fuels.

So let me again be clear where I stand, where the European Union stands.

I want this COP to mark **the beginning of the end for fossil fuels.**

This is a key part for the EU and for our negotiating mandate,

meaning that all 27 EU Member States want this to be part of the negotiated outcome.

I will be negotiating, together with Teresa, on their behalf to secure this outcome.

We simply have to get rid of fossil fuels in full.

Ladies and gentlemen, the EU has already set the tone.

We got the support of more than 120 countries for the Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge, initiated by the European Commission President.

It says that by 2030, we will triple renewable energy capacity

and double energy efficiency globally, as part of our efforts to phase out fossil fuels from energy generation.

But we have over 190 parties here at COP28.

And we need all of these parties, all of these parties to agree to phase out fossil fuels.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Teresa and I and our teams will be giving it our all.

Because we know that the science is clear.

And because we already see what is happening with only 1.2 degrees temperature rise, in basically every single corner of the globe.

Last year, we measured that 2022 was the warmest year on record.

We are now in 2023, and we have the exact same statistic.

Now 2023 is the warmest year on record, and everyone across the world has first-hand experience, unfortunately, with the effects of climate change.

So that means that the transition has to happen now and has to happen faster.

The Global Stocktake must recognise the science and plot a path forward that is in line with a 1.5-degree future.

So that is our task, and I am very much looking forward to getting the work done.

Thank you very much.

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