

## COP25. The moment of truth for the EU

**Domingo Jiménez Beltrán**

Trustee of the “Fundación Renovables”

Former Executive Director of the EEA

December, the 4th, 2019

In the context of the Conference of the United Nations (UN) on Climate Change (COP25) taking place in Madrid, the European Parliament (EP) has just adopted a Resolution to declare “**climate and environmental emergency**” in Europe and globally, which is accompanied by another one asking for more specific measures.

The EP urges the European Union (EU) to present its strategy to **neutralize all emissions as soon as possible**, but at the latest before 2050. In addition, it asks the European Commission (EC) to ensure that all legislative and budgetary proposals consider the objective of limiting global warming to a maximum of 1.5 °C by the end of the century.

As a concrete measure, among others more specific ones -for example, to double the contributions of Member States (MS) to the Fund against Climate Change as well as adjust the EU budget to this end-, the new President of the EC, **Ursula von der Leyen**, is required to include a target for the reduction of emissions by at least 55% by 2030 within her European Green Deal initiative, higher than the target included at the current Energy and Climate Packages, which is 40%.

The EP should be warmly congratulated for this ambitious and opportunistic initiative. But the question is how this demand will be translated into proposals by the EC, who has the capacity of initiative, to agree and implement strategies and plans to really achieve “**zero emissions / net balance**” before 2050 and a target of 55% of emissions reduction compared to 1990.

So overall, how can we make valid the “Declaration of climate and environmental emergency”? It implies that the EU and, operationally, the EC enter the policies of energy and climate change in the emergency room for drastic, event disruptive, measures that need urgent implementation. We must break the caution and progressiveness imposed by some MS and, above all, by **economic sectors such as energy, mining, electric, transport, tourism, agriculture and, even, trade unions**. We don’t have any time left and the reduction efforts must be tripled, at least.

For now, the European Council, that shares legislative capacity in co-decision with the EP, has already denied its support to the proposal of EC to achieve a net balance of the emissions in 2050, as requested by the EP. This is due to the **refusal of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic**, countries, particularly Poland, that consider insufficient those aids proposed by the EC for the transition of their mining industry and power generation based on coal.

How can these situations be reversed in order to make MS adopt a **more proactive rather than reactive role**? What can be done to convince MS that if it is advantageous for the EU, the world in general, it is also for each of them, regardless of their circumstances?

Turning around the current situation requires a transformation of the model of production and consumption of the EU and, consequently, of the **community policies on energy and climate**. At the same time, we need to increase substantially the community budgetary and financial resources in order to make this ambitious and urgently needed transition feasible.

Therefore, it seems that the only instrument capable of making valid the Declaration of Emergency Climate, and make credible and viable the required energy transition is transforming the policy of Energy and Climate into a Common policy of the EU (CECP), which would imply the transfer or assignment of competencies to the EU by the MS, within a sector so “strategic” and well defended by MS. The most famous of these Common Policies is the Agricultural one, namely CAP (Common Agricultural Policy). Through it, the EU would legislate with instruments of direct application and no need of prior transposition into national legislation. In addition, enough community resources would be needed to achieve this CECP, which could involve multiplying, more than increase, the **ridiculous EU budget** that, in the new financial perspectives 2021-2027, is hardly closer to a 1.1% of the Community GDP requested by the CE and of which almost 40% is taken by the CAP.

It would be a great opportunity, **once updated the Lisbon Treaty, to become the “Madrid Treaty”**, offering sufficient competences in energy and climate matters for a CECP and eliminating unanimity for decisions of the Council on taxation, to introduce community taxes on energy and climate, as desired by the EC. This would allow to introduce community a tax on CO<sub>2</sub> that was already proposed in 1992 on the occasion of the famous **Rio de Janeiro Conference** that gave birth to the Climate Change Convention, as well as community taxes on fuel, on the kerosene for aviation, on electricity from non-renewable sources and many others that would guide the change in the energy and economic model.

On the contrary, avoiding the implementation of a CECP would involve not only not making valid the **Emergency Declaration** in political terms, but also turning it in a tortuous process, with no practical or operational sense at all.

**Energy, which is at EU roots**, with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), could now become the basis for its dynamism and thus lead the global shift to “make the challenge of climate change into a climax for change” (beating the atavistic and reactive “fight against climate change”), and ignoring the deniers, especially President Trump, letting them enjoy the disadvantages of denying Climate Change.

Madrid COP25 is the moment to progress towards a Common Energy and Climate Policy in the EU as a response to the Resolution from the EP as well as the demands of the UN and the general claim of European and world citizens, who are tired of the continuous delay in the

---

horizon of emissions reversal. It is the moment of truth for the EU to lead by example the global change.

English translation of the article published by La Información on December 4, 2019:

<https://www.lainformacion.com/opinion/domingo-jimenez-beltran/cop25-la-hora-de-la-verdad-para-la-ue/6525039/>