Climate Diplomacy Study
Evaluation of the effectiveness of EU Climate Diplomacy from 2009-2015

Bonn Side event: EU Climate Diplomacy: Innovative approaches for a climate-resilient, low-carbon future

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Overview

1. Evaluation approach
2. Overall assessment of effectiveness of EU Climate Diplomacy 2009-15
3. Evaluation topics/questions
   - Evolvement of strategic partnerships and their role in making Paris a success
   - Strategies and policy instruments
   - Compare and contrast approaches in climate diplomacy
   - The EU’s engagement in multi- and pluri-lateral for a
   - The EU’s role in engaging with non-state actors
4. Challenges ahead
Evaluation of effectiveness of EU climate diplomacy in the run-up to COP 21 (2009-15) - Approach

- **Study background:** Commissioned by the European Commission (DG CLIMA in cooperation with EEAS)

- **Two components:** Evaluation and forward looking perspective (additional analysis to assess the strategic options for future EU climate diplomacy in the context of evolving strategic partnerships and broader geopolitics).

- **Objective of the evaluation:** retrospective assessment of the effectiveness of EU Climate Diplomacy and selected EU climate diplomacy partnerships in influencing an ambitious global climate agreement over the 2009-2015 period.

- **Country focus:**
  - United States of America (US);
  - China;
  - Brazil;
  - India;
  - Ethiopia and Senegal (as examples of Least Developed Countries (LDCs))
  - Fiji (as examples of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSISs))

- **Approach:**
  - Refinement of methodology and evaluation questions
  - Data collection (desk based research and approx. 40 stakeholder interviews)
  - Data analysis (contribution and contextual analysis etc)
  - Synthesis and conclusions
Intervention logic

**Climate diplomacy rationale**
Achievement of an ambitious climate agreement and commitments to reach what is deemed to be a safe level of climate change.

Aim of EU Climate Diplomacy Efforts since 2009 have been:

1. **Achieve ambitious deal through intensive outreach activities with a wide range of countries and stakeholders, striving for an ambitious coalition and the necessary political momentum, and**
2. **Fostering climate action to stay on track towards the 2°C objective and supporting partner countries in preparing for their respective commitments by 2015 and in moving towards more climate resilient societies.**

**External factors:**
- Global dynamics
- Economic interests
- Public opinion
- Domestic policies
- Other partnerships

**Inputs**
- Diplomatic dialogues and initiatives
- Financial support to low emissions climate resilient development

**Activities**
- Bilateral and multilateral dialogues and summits
- Communication platforms with non-state actors
- Climate finance
- Capacity building
- Trade
- Energy cooper.
- Neighborhood and association agreements

**Outputs**
- Joint agreements, statements and strategies
- Climate policies in place (e.g. through NAMAs support)
- Capacity built (e.g. trained professionals)
- Low carbon tech installed
- Networks and trust established

**Medium-term outcomes**
- Higher national ambitions
- Enhanced economic collaboration and trade
- Joint standards
- Enhanced collaboration on all levels
- Add. co-benefits

**Long-term impacts**
- Joint achievement of ambitious climate deal
- Strategies and means in place for its implementation

Build strategic partnerships with selected countries to achieve joint objectives in the international climate negotiations.
Assessment of effectiveness of EU Climate Diplomacy 2009-15

• 1990s/early 2000s: “leadership by example”
  • Ambitious domestic EU targets lead to international engagement to secure comparable ambitions from developed countries
  • Ambitious policies support the EU’s international credibility and provide basis for the EU’s international leadership.

• Copenhagen (2009) - evolving geopolitical configuration weakened EU normative/soft power:
  • EU influence was reduced due to its declining relative share in global GHG emissions
  • Focus on global action (all major emitters) brought other leaders to the fore and decreased relative weight of the EU
  • Re-engagement of the US under president Obama in 2009 created new alliances

→ The traditional EU strategy that was primarily based on leading by example and persuasion proved insufficient
Assessment of effectiveness of EU Climate Diplomacy 2009-15

- **Cancun and Durban Summits (2010 and 2011)** - EU acted as a bridge builder between major emitters
  - EU approached and coordinated closely with developing and vulnerable countries that shared its desire for a legally binding and universal regime (Cartagena Dialogue)
  - Probed possible compromises with veto players such as China, India, Japan and US
  - In Durban this bridge-building strategy was combined with a conditional pledge to agree to an extension of the Kyoto Protocol, if other major emitters committed themselves to legally binding reductions

  ➔ EU acting as “Leadiator”, a leader and mediator (Karin Bäckstrand & Ole Elgström 2013).
Assessment of effectiveness of EU Climate Diplomacy 2009-15

- **Paris Agreement** (2015)
  - Significant achievement in contemporary multilateral environmental diplomacy
  - Provisions reflected the EU’s objectives to a large extent
  - A combination of factors played a role in this success:
    - **US-China alliance** was crucial and provided the foundation for what could be achieved; also defining the limiting lines for ambition.
    - **Lower prices for renewable energy** and **support by major non-state actors** gaining strength worldwide
    - **EU’s ambitious policies and its experience** in putting domestic climate policies in place made them an important player
    - **EU reoriented its ambitions** to accommodate bottom-up ‘nationally determined contributions’ and **proactively engaged in coalition-building and bridge-building**
    - **EU provided increased climate finance and technical assistance** for the elaboration of climate action plans and NDCs, building confidence and enabling parties to submit commitments.
    - **French Presidency** built trust and directed the negotiations towards an ambitious outcome.

  ➔ With Paris, the EU therefore consolidated its role as a ‘**leadiator**’ (leader and mediator) in international climate policy
Evaluation along specific topics and questions focusing on strategic partnerships

Role of the EU’s strategic bilateral partnerships in the international climate negotiations

• None of the strategic partnerships we have analysed can be singled out as the “game changer” bringing about agreement and ambition. Some were however particularly important for the final results:
  • It clearly paid off for the **EU to work closely with developing countries and small island states** during the years leading up to Paris and to intensify relationships.
  • Technical and financial assistance played a major role for developing trusted relationships and a **joined-up approach with those countries**.
  • **Close alignment with the US** (under the Obama administration) was key, particularly as the US had a **strong influence on the BASIC countries**.
  • The EC’s normative and top-down approach with leading emerging economies was less successful with these countries.
  • However, EU Member States through their direct links, support programmes and contacts, were able to have some significant impact on China, India and Brazil (among others)
  • The effectiveness of partnerships was highly dependent on specific government constellation, i.e. who was in power in which country during the analysed time period.
  • Europe's wealth of non-state actors were also crucial to amplifying political and economic signals crucial to Paris’ success
Evaluation along specific topics and questions – cont’d

Strategies and policy instruments deployed by the EU

- The **instruments were often mutually supporting**

- **Increasing mainstreaming of climate diplomacy objectives across instruments** and their alignment to help partner countries deliver was key.

- **Technical assistance and climate finance**
  - EC used instruments such as the **Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA)** to support recipient countries in their development of INDCs, MRV systems and NAMAs.
  - Leading **MS also developed targeted support programmes** (e.g. the German Climate Initiative) that were effective in enhancing ambition in key areas of the international agreement.
  - Tailored assistance supporting the specific needs of the recipient countries was helpful to deliver political messages and support agreements (e.g. ETS in China).
  - Beyond the technical benefits these activities **offered a platform for dialogue and trust building**.

- **Political meetings and dialogues**
  - **Influential MS played an important role here**, creating a joint understanding of the key positions on both sides, the issues faced and the need for support. (e.g. German-Brazil cooperation)
  - **Informal dialogues implemented by non-state actors** created a more open and honest platform for exchange and the development of solutions (e.g. Agreement for Climate Transformation 2015 Initiative (ACT 2015))

- **Green Diplomacy Network**
  - Helped to communicate joint EU messages in a coordinated and consistent way to partner countries (dissemination).

- **Trade deals and Energy Cooperation**
  - Opportunity to mainstream climate change into economic and cooperation, though complexities involved and difficulties to maintain environmental and climate standards should not be underestimated.
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**Evaluation along specific topics and questions – cont’d**

The EU’s use of multi-lateral relations to advance its climate diplomacy goals

- The EU used various multi- and plurilateral fora in the run-up to Paris to gain support for its key positions.
- Both the **G7** and **G20** as important fora for the EU (through its Member States) to engage in and to promote ambitious actions in line with key European positions within the UNFCCC.
- This was combined with the **EU’s engagement with informal groups of countries** that shaped around specific thematic issues and/or shared objectives (e.g. **Cartagena Dialogue for Progressive Action** and the ‘**High Ambition Coalition**’):
  - Through intensive interaction and dialogue based on joined objectives a sentiment of belonging and cohesion was created.
  - European leaders travelled intensively to reach out to potential partners for the coalition.
  - Discussions emphasized partnership and mutual learning.
- EU has proactively contributed to **technical fora** such as the **OECD CCXG** through its experience in implementing climate related policies.
The EU’s engagement with non-state actors and groups in the run-up to Paris

• The EU has been seen by these actors as a supporting force in achieving commitment on the international level.

• Analysis indicates, however, that despite the EU’s efforts to support these groups there has not been a strategic approach on how to mobilise and cooperate with non-state actors to achieve higher ambition.

• As the focus has moved to implementing the Paris agreement this seems to change and there is an increasing willingness to engage with non-state actors on a more strategic level.
Challenges ahead

Following the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the task of climate diplomacy has become both broader and deeper (including economic relationships and support of subnational action)

The following **benchmarks of success** are anticipated by stakeholders in **2020**:

- **Consistent progress on low carbon transition in the real economy**, especially in core economies which shape international markets.

- **Foundations for a well below 2°C or 1.5°C pathway are being built** (e.g. sustainable financial reform, legislation and investments in core infrastructure including grids).

- **Key indicators**: falling costs for low carbon technologies; avoidance of locking in high carbon infrastructure.

Before **2025** stakeholders expect there to be evidence that a 2°C trajectory is credible and a well below 2°C/1.5°C trajectory remains possible:

- **Significantly increased ambition** reducing the temperature trajectory;

- **Robust transparency rules**, including the land sector, applied to all parties of the regime;

- International cooperation and finance is **supporting developing country NDC components** (both mitigation and adaptation).
Challenges ahead – cont’d

- Europe will need to realign its approach with implementation diplomacy:
  - Aligning EU and MS policy with the increased ambition of the Paris Agreement.
  - Applying Europe’s ‘Team EU’ approach to climate diplomacy to support greater alignment and outreach.
- EU climate diplomacy should seek to maximise the value of its assets and networks in order to multiply actions by other countries and non-state actors.
- EU will have to help mainstreaming Paris into processes and policies that follow the interests of partner countries.

“We need to tell a story which people can believe in, how dealing with the climate problem helps to improve livelihoods. We need to make a compelling case to prioritise the climate problem.” (German lead negotiator 2017)
Questions and discussion