

Ratifying the Paris Climate Agreement

Where things currently stand

- For the Paris Agreement to come into effect, 55 countries, representing 55% of global emissions need to legally ratify it or otherwise join.
- Only months after the historic breakthrough in December last year, the world is already very close to putting the Paris Agreement into effect. To date, the Agreement has been ratified by 19 countries and another 33 parties have expressed their intention to join by the end of 2016.
- This means that we can expect to have 52 countries to ratify by the end of 2016, between them accounting for 54.39% of global emissions. For a full list see Annex below.
- Entry into force of the Paris Agreement before the end of this year can therefore be achieved if only three more countries legally join, who between them share at least 0.6% of global emissions.
- Many big economies (including e.g. China, USA, Mexico and Australia) have already expressed their intention to ratify the Paris Agreement by the end of this year. Some European countries such as France and Hungary have also begun or already completed necessary domestic approval procedures to join the Agreement.

The role of the UK

- The UK is responsible for 1.5% of global emissions.
- We have been an international leader, both in terms of cutting greenhouse gas emissions and helping to secure a legally binding international agreement. We are likely to maintain this position, no matter what the implications of the result of the recent referendum on membership of the European Union.
- With early ratification of Paris within reach, the UK now has the option to continue its international climate leadership by helping to precipitate early ratification, alongside other important leading countries.

What will the benefits be?

- Taking action and ratifying Paris Agreement would help ensure national efforts were supported by global participation in the mitigation effort.
- A strong, international climate commitment decreases the risk of an ambitious domestic policy undermining the competitiveness of small number of sectors facing genuine risks (e.g. aluminium, chemicals, steel).
- Paris contains elements that will help to facilitate international trade in mitigation effort (Article 6) and implementation would help the UK to meet its carbon targets at least-cost.
- We can also expect an increase in demands for export of environmental goods and services and a boost to clean tech investment in innovations.

- But perhaps most importantly early ratification of Paris will further serve to increase investor confidence in the clean economy both in the UK and internationally.

What are the options?

- There are still many unanswered questions regarding the effect of the UK leaving the European Union on climate policies. The Paris Agreement was signed by the EU as a bloc of countries. The expected procedure is that each individual Member State has to ratify the Agreement, with the European Parliament then ratifying for the EU as a whole. However, a number of lawyers have argued that individual Member States can ratify the Agreement fully, without waiting for the joint action of whole EU¹.
- There are two scenarios the UK can help to create to trigger entry into force this year:
 - o **Scenario 1:** UK ratifies and formally joins the agreement along with other EU countries ratifying this year. Together, the UK, France and Hungary (who have already passed all steps towards ratification) would reach the threshold of 55% (57.44%), and would also meet the condition of at least 55 countries ratifying. Germany has already also indicated it will take steps to ratify and could also perform this role. This scenario would only trigger entry into force if all the European countries involved are willing to formally join the agreement without waiting for the European Parliament.
 - o **Scenario 2:** UK joins the agreement as an individual sovereign State and brings two other countries with it, eg from the Commonwealth (for example Mozambique and Papua New Guinea, both of whom are exposed to impacts from unchecked climate change and together would reach 55.98%), without needing to involve any other countries in the EU.
- Either way, UK early ratification can deliver the necessary leadership to tip the Paris agreement into effect before the end of the year.

Practical next steps

The process of ratification is not a lengthy or complex one. A simple Statutory Instrument, constituting only a few lines of legal text, needs only to be tabled and laid before Parliament for 21 sitting days. After this time the SI would be adopted by both Houses of Parliament by negative resolution. Meaning that the SI will pass into law unless a vote rejecting the instrument is called and won by a simple majority.

¹ This fact was mentioned in several online articles (e.g. <http://www.climatechangenews.com/2016/04/28/how-to-bring-the-paris-agreement-in-this-year/> and <https://www.carbonbrief.org/explainer-when-will-european-union-ratify-paris-agreement>).

Annex: Countries who have ratified or expressed intention to do so in 2016 (state from 15 July 2016)²

Countries who already ratified	% global emission	Date of ratification	Countries intending to ratify in 2016	% global emission
Barbados	0.01	22 Apr 2016	Albania	0.02
Belize	0	22 Apr 2016	Antigua and Barbuda	0
Fiji	0.01	22 Apr 2016	Argentina	0.89
Grenada	0	22 Apr 2016	Australia	1.46
Guyana	0.01	20 May 2016	Bahamas	0
Maldives	0	22 Apr 2016	Bangladesh	0.27
Marshall Islands	0	22 Apr 2016	Brazil	2.48
Mauritius	0.01	22 Apr 2016	Cameroon	0.45
Nauru	0	22 Apr 2016	Canada	1.95
Norway	0.14	20 Jun 2016	Chile	0.35
Palau	0	22 Apr 2016	China	20.09
Palestine	n/a	22 Apr 2016	Comoros	0
Samoa	0	22 Apr 2016	Costa Rica	0.03
Seychelles	0	29 Apr 2016	Ghana	0.09
Somalia	n/a	22 Apr 2016	Honduras	0.03
St. Kitts and Nevis	0	22 Apr 2016	Indonesia	1.49
St. Lucia	0	22 Apr 2016	Jamaica	0.04
St. Vincent & Gren.	0	29 Apr 2016	Kazakhstan	0.84
Tuvalu	0	22 Apr 2016	Liberia	0.02
			Mali	0.03
			Mexico	1.7
			Micronesia	0
			Monaco	0
			Morocco	0.16
			New Zealand	0.22
			Nigeria	0.57
			Paraguay	0.06
			Philippines ³	0.34
			Sierra Leone	0.98
			Ukraine	1.04
			USA	17.89
			Vanuatu	0
			Viet Nam	0.72

² https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtds_g_no=XXVII-7-d&chapter=27&lang=en, http://unfccc.int/files/ghg_data/application/pdf/table.pdf, <http://climateanalytics.org/hot-topics/ratification-tracker-projections.html>

³ According to local news, the president of Philippines declared that the country will not join the Agreement. This information has not yet been confirmed by the UN. <http://www.manilatimes.net/duterte-to-flout-climate-change-deal/274608/>