

At present, global greenhouse gas emissions are not on track to meet the Paris Agreement's goal of keeping global warming below 2 °C and continuing efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 °C. It is important to realise that increasing climate ambitions, economic prosperity and sustainable growth work in harmony.

The EU Environment Council, attended by the State Secretary at the Slovenian Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Metka Gorišek, reached an agreement on the EU Climate Act, which sets out the long-term goal of EU's carbon neutrality until 2050 at the EU level.

In achieving this objective it is crucial that the planning of policies and measures also takes into account the national specificities and starting points of the Member States, and in particular respect for the principles of technology neutrality and fair transition.

The Ministers also endorsed the EU's nationally determined contribution (NDC) to reducing GHG emissions by 2030, which the EU will report to the UN Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC) Secretariat by the end of the year. In this way, it will encourage the other Parties to increase their ambitions and thus contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement. This is particularly important in view of the next Conference of the Parties to COP26 UNFCCC next November in Glasgow.

As a member of the Trio, Slovenia, together with Germany and Portugal, supported the efforts of the German Presidency to reach an agreement. State Secretary Metka Gorišek pointed out that climate change was a challenge not only for the EU, but for the entire planet. It is therefore important for the EU to show other countries that increasing climate ambitions, economic prosperity and sustainability go hand in hand in the context of the COVID-19 post-pandemic recovery. Our climate diplomacy and dialogues with third countries must therefore also be strengthened before the next climate conference.

The Council also adopted a general approach on amending the Aarhus Regulation, in which the European Commission addresses the shortcomings identified by the Aarhus Conventions Compliance Committee. The amendments concern the allegation that public access to legal remedies against EU acts having an impact on environmental law is not fully in line with the provisions of the Aarhus Convention.

In the afternoon, double Council Conclusions were adopted on the role of the circular economy in economic recovery and on digitisation for the benefit of the environment.

The circular economy is closely linked to the achievement of environmental strategies and objectives, as well as economic growth, as we want to follow the European Green Agreement and related strategies and initiatives. We therefore see the circular economy as a tool for achieving environmental objectives and carbon neutrality, and we want to focus in

particular on investing in digitalisation and a low-carbon, circular economy.

The ministers also exchanged first opinions on the recently published EU strategy on chemicals, in which the Republic of Slovenia will provide pragmatic and well-thought-out solutions that will take into account the situation and the capacity of the economy.

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