

Westphalian-Wilhelminian University of Münster  
University of Twente, Enschede  
Academic Year 2014/2015  
Bachelor's Thesis

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**The Role of the European Union prior to the United Nations Climate  
Conference in Paris 2015**

**Which Role assumes the EU in the International Preparation Process and  
how is it's Effort to be valued?**

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Submission Date: 18.08.2015

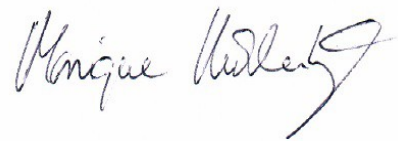
## **Declaration**

I declare on oath that I authored the following paper independently and without assistance and that I only used the resources indicated in the paper.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Monique Kuhlenkamp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

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## **1. Introduction**

Climate Change is one of the major threats to humankind. It endangers every creature on earth, causes rising sea levels, draughts, increases extreme weather events, air pollution and species extinction, just to mention a few of the destructive consequences of global warming. If scientific studies prove to be right, some regions will become inhabitable, others unfertile, third ones may disappear in the ocean. Regarding the continuous population growth, this may lead to disastrous situations with nations unable to supply their inhabitants with the basic needs.

For a long time climate change and its impact had been replaced or marginalized. Governments feared economic disadvantages when fostering emission reductions and could either not afford it or were afraid of relative losses. Insecurity within the international climate regime about the compliance of other actors, the refusal of many developing and emerging countries to contribute to climate protection as well as scientific inaccuracy intensified the problem.

One of the few actors that dealt with the problem of climate change almost from the time of its discovery was the European Union. As one of the major producers of greenhouse gases, historically as well as presently, the EU bears special responsibility and is expected, by many developing and emerging countries, to behave as a role model. In the past the Union had mostly been able to fulfill this expectation and developed to a leader within the rising international climate regime.

After years of stagnation and small compromises 2015 may be a year of crucial importance to climate protection, as the United Nations Climate Conference in Paris (COP 21) is of central meaning to the future collaboration and the realisation of the two-degree target, meaning that global warming shall be limited to maximal two degrees. The conference's main goal is to establish a new agreement which shall replace the Kyoto Protocol as a universal and legally binding convention and introduce a new era of common action against climate change. Due to its historically evolved leadership, its economic and political power as well as its responsibility for climate change it can be expected that many countries will orientate themselves on the European Union's exertions and adapt to it their own efforts. Correspondingly, the role assumed by the EU, its endeavours to realise an ambitious agreement on climate protection and its own commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, will be one of the decisive factors in the realisation of a successful climate convention.

This assignment deals with the valuation of efforts the European Union invests in the preparation process for the UN Climate Conference in Paris 2015. Moreover, it tries to assess whether the Union once more assumes the role of leadership within the climate regime and, if so, what sort of leadership it may be. According to the Union's endeavours of the last two decades the hypothesis of this assignment goes as follows: The European Union assumes a leading role in the preparation

process to the UN Climate Conference 2015.

In order to investigate the role of the European Union the work of Alexandra Lindenthal, *'Leadership im Klimaschutz'*, will be employed as theoretical framework, on whose basis the present Union's efforts can be assessed. Lindenthal generates a theory in which she distinguishes between four different types of leadership. These types can be measured by certain indicators, including the topics interests, resources, power, norms and form of communication, which can be employed in order to evaluate the efforts of the European Union during the preparation process for the UN Climate Conference in Paris, focusing on the commitments defined in the *2030 framework for climate and energy policies* and the attitude the EU (or leading European nations) adopt during preliminary international conferences as the Climate Conferences in Geneva, Bonn or the G7 Summit 2015. Accordingly, the methodological approach to answer the research question is based upon a qualitative content analysis.

Additionally, the assignment gives some background information to the European Union's role in past Climate Conferences, international expectations as well as to the meaning and structure of the United Nations Climate Conference. On the one hand this knowledge will help the reader to fully understand the subject and to give the topic a broader frame. On the other it will allow to answer the question how the endeavours of the EU are to be valued, taking into account the needs and official goals of climate protection.

## 2. Theoretical Framework: Leadership in International Climate Regimes

### 2.1 State of research

Due to the only recent rise of international cooperation in the environmental field and its meaning within global policies, scientific research in this sector has a rather limited history. First works on leadership within regimes were published in the late 1980s, while increasing interest in this subject can first be observed around the turn of the millenium.

The foundation for numerous other scientists was provided by Oran R. Young. His work *'Political leadership and regime formation: on the development of institutions in international society'* examines the establishment of regimes through the wish of individual actors in order to embark upon, mostly long-term, institutional bargaining. For this institutional bargaining and the establishment of regimes leadership is an important pillar. However, Young argues that there is not the one kind of leadership, executed by one nation that guides all others, but that there are rather different forms of leadership, overtaken by perhaps several individuals (Young 1991: 287). Though he generates a categorization with three different forms of leadership, Young claims that the borders between them are sometimes blurred and interaction between these forms is possible (Young 1991: 288). Nonetheless, according to his theory one has to differentiate between structural, entrepreneurial and intellectual leadership. The first one describes the nation's power based on material resources, reflected in the potential to build up pressure in negotiations and thereby receiving the consent of other individuals. Entrepreneurial leadership is characterised by the actors expertise in negotiations, combining its abilities to foster cooperation and mediation between the regime's members and to organise and stimulate the proceedings successfully. The last form of leadership, called intellectual leadership, rests upon ideas, knowledge and possible approaches brought in the negotiations to promote discussions and to find solutions. According to Young the foundation of a regime is only possible through interaction of all three forms of leadership (Young 1991: 288ff.).

In the aftermath of Young's work the question of the evolvment of leadership and its main characteristics were extensively discussed. In 1993 Keohane et al claimed a nation likely to embark upon leadership if it has an advanced environmental policy apparatus, is confronted by a major domestic pressure concerning environmental protection and is heavily affected by the risk of environmental damage. Other scientists focused on the roles of actors within the negotiating process, beyond the meaning of the regimes leader. In 1998 Peterson introduced a distinction between the participating actors in a regime, where he differentiates between leaders, followers, luggards and opponents. According to his explanation leaders worry about environmental problems, believe an

international agreement to be necessary to find an effective solution and are willing to offer own resources for its realisation. Followers share the leader's concern for the state of environment and are willing to attempt its proposals. The term laggards describes actors, who hesitate with their actions as they are not willing to commit themselves to international obligations. Opponents, on the other side of the spectrum, do not agree with the leader on its proposed approach and oppose its leadership (Lindenthal 2008: 90).

One of the most important extensions to Youngs theory was supplied by Michael Grubb and Joyeeta Gupta in 2000. They agree to the assumption that the foundation of a regime requires leadership to fasten norms, principles, responsibilities and structure. However, once the foundation process has been completed the regime should be able to prosper autonomously and to be independent from individual actors (Grubb / Gupta 2000: 17). Furthermore, they also establish a distinction between different kinds of leadership, orientated on the existing categorization of Young, and apply it on the environmental leadership assumed by the European Union. Accordingly, the EU is able to fulfill structural leadership, which is based upon economic and political power as well as the willingness to employ these through diplomatic and financial resources. The instrumental leadership concentrates on the allocation of expertise concerning regimes, diplomacy and negotiations. The directional leadership implies the actor's ability to act as a role model through the development of own solution proposals and the application of new techniques and innovations. Grubb and Gupta claim that the EU would be able to assume all three kinds of leadership, as it possesses considerable economic and political power, diplomatic knowledge and the means to foster environmental innovation (Grubb / Gupta 2000: 18 ff.).

The above named research on the topic of leadership within climate regime has been fundamental to many other scientists and the comprehension of environmental negotiations in general. Among others, Alexandra Lindenthal has been influenced by the explanations of Young and Grubb/Gupta, so that her theory on different forms of leadership shows some parallels to their theses.

## **2.2 Forms of Leadership by Lindenthal**

In her work *'Leadership im Klimaschutz'*, published in 2009, Alexandra Lindenthal examines the role of the European Union in International Climate Regimes. Therefore, she develops a theory concerning different kinds of leadership, identifying four categories named self-serving leadership, standard-setting leadership, problem-solving leadership and intercessional leadership.

According to Lindenthal leadership, regardless of its concrete form, is characterised by the recognition of international problems and the willingness to assume responsibility to global

challenges. In order to solve these problems a leader fosters international regimes, trying to convince others of the importance to act in common and with high intensity. Through interaction a leader attempts to subtly influence attitudes, norms and interests of actors, targeting to change them for the achievement of the common goal. Different forms of persuasion are open towards a leader; either it can act as a role model and win other members through moral values or as a hegemonic power using its influence. Another possibility is the application of financial or economic incentives, coupled with the persuasion that submission will lead to individual improvement and recompense.

The four categories of Leadership distinguished by Lindenthal vary in the leader's principle motive for overtaken responsibility as well as in the form of persuasion and cooperation with other members of the international regime.

The *self-serving Leadership* bases upon an actor who founds and supports the international regime because of self-interest and personal benefits. Correspondingly, it is willing to employ private material resources to promote the regime and to foster personally desired solutions. The leader utilises its power and material resources to solve crises in its own interest, to influence the member's attitudes, norms and decisions by creating rewards or financial incentives and to control the regime's development. Therefore, it uses a moderate form of hard power, but does not wish or expect other members to tolerate inopportune consequences.

A *standard-setting Leadership* differs mainly in the leader's focus on indispensable rules and norms, which are in its view elementary for the successful achievement of the regimes targets. The leader tries to insert these norms in the regime and attempts to convince other members of their importance, realising that the rules have to be followed by all actors in order to achieve a positive result and stability. It has different possibilities to introduce its preferred norms, all of them belonging to the category soft power; either it argues for their importance and convinces the members of the impropriety of existing rules or it tries to act as a role model, thereby subtly animating the rest to follow its example. As a moral authority the leader does not only try to insert its norms for the benefit of the regime, but is also willing to discuss and question these with other members. Through the discourse a learn process evolves, modifying attitudes and interests of members and leading to change and progress within the regime.

The *problem-solving Leadership* concentrates on the contribution of options for action. The leader identifies global problems, thereby channelling international attention towards the theme and arguing for global cooperation. At the same time it offers potential methods and solutions to cope with the problem, which, at best, it has already implemented and proved to be effective. Due to the



assured success and the unconcern about questions of realisation, which have already been answered by the leader, other members are willing to follow the example. Besides acting as a role model and thereby convincing third parties of the own ideas, the leader uses other forms of soft power as constructive reasoning or the display of advantages. In the end members of the regime introduce the solution not because of financial incentives or possible benefits, but because they are convinced of the approach and the exemplary demeanour of the leader.

Finally, the *intercessional Leadership* is characterised by a focus on the constructive cooperation between the regime's members. The leader offers the own expertise in international negotiations to improve the effectiveness of the regime, to facilitate discourses or to solve disputes. In a first step the leader arouses the interest on an international agreement by contrasting the status quo with the positive results of common action. After it has accomplished to convince the members to embark on negotiations it has to organise these by setting the agenda, guiding the proceedings and offering basic requirements as lodgings or scientific research. Moreover, it fosters cooperation by supporting the building of coalitions, mediating between key parties or setting priorities within the negotiations. The leader tries to mediate with arguments and reasoning. Besides this soft power it occasionally displays forms of moderate hard power by using financial or economic incentives to persuade hesitant members.

### **2.3 Operationalisation of Lindenthal's concept**

As already indicated in the description above, the four categories of leadership can be recognised by certain indicators. These indicators contain the sectors interests, norms, form of communication, power and resources.

The indicator *interests* covers the major feature of leadership, dealing with the reasons of a leader to embark on international cooperation, and having a strong influence on the actor's attitude and methods (covered by the other indicators) within the negotiations. The motivation can range from pure selfishness to the point of considering the best solution for the collective regime.

If the leader acts in a rather self-interested mode, as in the event of self-serving leadership, it is not interested in arguments or interests of other members but does only consider international cooperation due to the fact that it is not able to face the problem autonomously. It tries to enforce own norms, although without harming other nations interests, employs compromise-orientated communication and does in many cases use hard power.

In contrast to the self-serving leader other forms of leadership are more interested in solving a challenge to the benefit of the whole regime. A norm-setting leader incorporates the interests of

other members and is willing to admit drifts of interests in the progress of norm-setting.

Problem-solving leaders as well as mediating leaders are of the opinion that the challenge requires common action, meaning the full participation of all members. Therefore, the problem-solving leader expects interests to change through the collective negotiation process, while the mediating leader tries to conciliate the different interests into one common denominator in order to achieve a result acceptable to all parties. Accordingly, these three forms of leadership also consider other interests, are willing to reflect the own norms, use agreement-orientated communication and commonly employ soft power or, rarely, moderate hard power.

As suggested above, the application of the own *norms* is an important indicator to distinguish between the forms of leadership and reveals the main interest of a member's participation in a regime. If a leader cooperates with self-interested motives, e.g. the self-serving leader, it acts after the own norms and shows little to none willingness to scrutinize them. A norm-establishing leader, however, intends to convince others of the own norms but is willing to challenge them. Problem-solving leadership, on the other hand, implies that norms are generated through the contemplation of challenges and displayed approaches while in the case of the mediating leadership norms are established in the course of the negotiations and can be influenced by the leader.

The indicator *form of communication* distinguishes between two kinds of communication. In the first case the leader is trying to reach compromises, while the second form of communication is rather agreement-orientated. The self-serving leader belongs to the first communication group, while norm-establishing and problem-solving leaders are agreement-orientated. The mediating leader uses within the negotiations aspects of both the compromise and agreement-orientated forms of communication.

The indicators *power* and *resources* are closely connected to each other. The first one distinguishes between soft and hard power. In the case of soft power the leader uses argumentative persuasion by leading public attention towards an international problem, guiding discussions or acting as a role model. Hard power, on the contrary, defines the use of political or financial power. The leader utilizes financial or economic incentives to influence members of the regime and turns into account it's political force in order to gather other actors behind it's favoured course of action.

Soft power as well as hard power are only feasible by employing resources. The scientific community differs between material and immaterial resources. Material resources are describing articles, which, in the case of international negotiations, can be encountered in the forms of financial transactions, economic deals or coveted commodities. Immaterial resources, on the other hand, comprise intangible assets, e.g. scientific knowledge, information and expertise or management and organisation. According to this, hard power commonly requires the use of

material resources while soft power can be connected with immaterial resources.

The table below gives an overview of the four different forms of leadership and their characteristics concerning the indicators.

| Indicators    | Forms and Specifications   |   |   |  |
|---------------|--|---|---|--|
|               | Self-serving Leadership  | Norm-establishing Leadership  | Problem-solving Leadership  | Mediating Leadership   |
| Interests     | Individual interests influence establishment and formation of international regimes. Little willingness for reflection of own interests. | Consideration of interests of other regime members as regards the setting of norms and regulations. Common generation of norms affects interests of leader and followers. | Problem-solving regarded as matter of collective interest. Common perception of problems affects interests of leader and followers. | Evocation of interest in adoption of international treaties. Mediation between negotiating parties with divergent interests regarding international agreements. Consideration of interests of the involved as regards the formulation of international treaties. |
| Resources     | Material resources   | Immaterial resources  | Immaterial and material resources   | Immaterial and material resources  |
| Power         | Moderate hard power  | Soft power  | Soft power  | Soft power and moderate hard power   |
| Norms         | Action oriented on own norms. Little willingness to challenge own normative concept.   | Conviction of others regarding own normative concept. Willingness to challenge own normative concept. Generation of joint norms.  | Perceived problems and demonstrated options for solution influence norms of the regime.   | Establishment of norms through collective negotiations, which determine the leader's room for manoeuvre in terms of the influence towards other negotiating parties.   |
| Communication | Compromise-oriented Communication  | Agreement-oriented Communication  | Agreement-oriented Communication  | Agreement and Compromise-oriented Communication  |

*(Lindenthal 2009: 120; translated by Kellerhaus 2010: 17)*

### **3. Role of the EU in International Climate Negotiations**

#### **3.1 Expectations for the EU**

The European Union contains 28 developed nations and with Great Britain, the Netherlands, France and Germany the originators of industrialisation. According to new scientific research, Germany, United Kingdom and France occupy the places six, seven and eight in a ranking of national contribution to greenhouse gas emissions during the last 200 years (Matthews et al 2014: 5). Furthermore, if one considers the emissions per capita, the United Kingdom has to answer for the greatest amount of greenhouse gases, while Germany, the Netherlands and France are also among the ten largest contaminators (ibid: 7). Therefore, the European Union has a major responsibility towards environment protection and the combat of climate change. Many developing countries, whose share in the increasing temperature is until now marginal, but who suffer due to geological circumstances heavily from the consequences of the rising climate, refer to this argument of historical (and present) guilt, which makes the EU besides the US to the nation primarily responsible. Moreover, they argue that the majority of polluting articles produced in developing and emerging countries are consumed by or produced for industrialised nations (Matsui 2002: 154). Therefore, they are mostly unwilling to restrict the own emissions, as they feel disadvantaged and are more concerned about their economic development and industrial improvement. This attitude has led to the formulation of the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility', meaning that due to the global impact all countries are responsible for the protection of environment and climate, but because of their better economic and technological abilities as well as their larger share of pollution industrialised countries have to shoulder greater responsibility (ibid: 152). In practise this means that treaties imply double standards with more rights, fewer obligations and longer schedules for developing countries on the one hand, and more commitments as well as the duty to support less-developed countries for industrialised nations on the other. The principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility' can be retraced in many documents, e.g. in the basic United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992, in which exist explicit references to the guilt of developed countries and their responsibility to support, with financial and technological means, developing countries to act sustainable and to deal with the consequences of climate change (UNFCCC 1992: 2).

Until today the principle is cited by many nations, especially developing but also emerging countries as China or India, which want to avoid more regulations and obligations and therefore point towards the European Union or the United States as necessary leaders in environmental negotiations. Due to serious environmental damages and a rise of pollution especially emerging

countries have realised the need for action. In many cases, e.g. in countries as China, India, Brazil or Southafrica, national programmes have been initiated which include the targets to raise public awareness of climate change and strategies for adaptation and emission mitigation (Fekete et al 2013: 154). Moreover, some countries have lately shown a greater openness towards international negotiations. Despite of this positive development many emerging countries shrink back from intensive international commitments so that the traditional role allocation, with major responsibility for and focus on industrialised nations as the European Union, can be anticipated for the UN Climate Conference in Paris.

### **3.2 Role of the EU in past Climate Change Negotiations**

The European Union has earned the attribute to be one of the leaders in environmental protection and international climate negotiations. This feat has to be relevelated by the consideration of many drawbacks the political field suffered within the last two decades. Nations hesitated to commit themselves to international obligations, withdrew from already agreed conventions or embarked upon useless disputes on responsibility and guilt of climate change. Accordingly, it was not that difficult for a traditionally rather conservation-conscious continent as Europe to appear in a positive light.

While describing the engagement of the European Union one has to take into account two circumstances: firstly, that the European institution has developed through the last twenty years from an intergovernmental organisation called European Community to the present European Union, which has a greater amount of competences, instruments and credit within the international community. Secondly, the European Union has experienced a growth from twelve memberstates in 1990 to currently 28 countries. Naturally not only the economic, financial and technological disparities have increased, but also the interests and priorities of the members, making the achievement of a binding agreement for the entire union rather complicated (Oberthür / Kelly 2008: 46).

The inception of modern international environment protection can be dated back to the beginning of the 1970s, when the United Nations Conference on Human Environment marked the cornerstone for future efforts. More than a decade later the magnitude of climate change and it's possible consequences, combined with the fear of the newly detected ozon layer, began to receive major public attention, culminating in the IPCC panel of 1990, which declared climate change to be a severe, man-made threat (IPCC 1990: 11f.), and the foundation of the UNFCCC in 1992. The serious commitment of the European Community, hereafter referred to as EC, to climate protection

already begun in 1986. The European Parliament put it on the EC's agenda, emphasizing not only the responsibility of industrialised nations for climate change but also the necessity to support developing countries with the means to receive access to low-pollutant technologies (Lindenthal 2008: 132). In the following years the EC appealed to other nations for a reaction to climate change and achieved to reach a consensus within the own rows. In 1990, EC members agreed to stabilise their emissions by 2000 to the level of 1990. Although the agreement was not binding and its feasibility only due to the approach of burden sharing, meaning that some countries, e.g. the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany, were willing to reduce their emissions to a greater amount than indicated, leaving the possibility for other members, amongst others Spain, Portugal and Greece, to even increase their emissions for economic amendment, the stabilisation goal proved to be an important signal to the international community. During the second world climate conference other nations as Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Canada declared to follow the European example (ibid: 132).

In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro as well as the preparational enacting of the Framework Convention on Climate Change marked a new era in environment protection. Many countries within the EC, e.g. France, the Netherlands, Germany or Denmark, advocated the admittance of detailed obligations in the framework. In the end, this was shown to be impossible due to the resistance of some countries, among them the US. The members had to be satisfied with unspecified and unbinding commitments, containing promotion and scientific publishment on sustainbale technologies as well as the intention for international cooperation that would target to achieve a *'stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system'* (UNFCCC 1992: Art. 2).

In the 1997 following negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol, arguably until today the most important convention within climate protection, the European Union took over a leading role and contributed to a successful outcome. Already in the preparation process the EU fostered cooperation and progress, advocating the responsibility of developed countries and arguing for a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 15% of the 1990 level till 2010. Due to the resistance of other industrialised nations the EU had to submit to a more modest approach of only eight percent reduction, but it's ambitious attitude had not only put other nations under increasing pressure to make commitments, but also established the EU as the leading actor in the developing climate protection regime (Schreurs/ Tiberghien 2007: 20). In the aftermath of the negotiations the EU once more was the driving force and fostered the ratification process. Although many countries were sceptical or reluctant concerning the agreement and the US declared in 2001 their intention to

withdraw from the Protocol, the EU agreed on it in 2002 and tried to convince other major pollutants as Japan or Russia to follow it's example (ibid: 21).

In 2007 the European Union announced the target to reduce the average temperature increase to two degrees, a goal which was overtaken into international climate negotiations two years later at the COP 15 in Copenhagen, mentioned in the legally unbinding Copenhagen Accord (FCCC/CP/2009/11/Add.1: 5), and one year later, at the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancún, accepted. Besides this agreement the EU also influenced the global community with it's formulation of the 'Europe 2020' goals, which included the target to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% compared to the level of 1990, to increase the share of renewable energy by 20% and to reach 20% more energy efficiency. The goals, which should be realised by various strategies as emissions trading, were contemplated as ambitious and in 2008 represented the only binding GHG reduction targets for 2020 of a geopolitical region (Löschel et al 2010: 1). Despite of this positive agreement some experts argue that the goals are not ambitious enough and that the EU does not use it's full potential for stronger commitments and climate protection.

The achievement of the three goals vary; in the case of reduction of GHG emissions the European Union was already able to nearly reach it's goal in 2013, with 19% fewer emissions than in 1990, and could be able to accomplish 24% savings (EEA Report 6/2014: 42), while other nations, as the US and China were incapable to reduce their GHG emissions, but increased it, the first by 8,6% compared to 1990 (FCCC/SBI/2012/31: 15), the second by 189% (FAZ 22.01.2014). The achievement of the target for renewable energy resources has not prospered quite as well, but with 14,1% of renewable energy resources in 2012 the Union is still on schedule (ibid: 63). The final goal, the realisation of 20% more energy efficiency by 2020, is slightly endangered as experts predict a possible failure by one to two percent if implementation and enforcement of strategies will not increase within Member States (ibid: 75). Nevertheless, the general positive results show the EU to be on track of their heralded goals, a symbol and incentive to other nations to carry on in their own efforts.

To summarize it can be stated that the European Union has assumed a major leading role within international climate protection during the past thirty years. Through the formulation of ambitious goals in the 1990s and it's commitment to the realisation of the Kyoto Protocol contrary to the deprecative attitude of the US and other important nations, the European Union has fostered the development of an international climate regime with cooperation and binding regulations. Through it's exemplary behaviour the EU has activated other nations to enact stronger commitments and put major pollutants under pressure. Despite these positive achievements it must be noted that the EU lost some of it's progressive spirit in climate protection, visible in less ambitious targets, partly due

to the enlargement of the union and economic difficulties within the last decade.



## 4. United Nations Climate Conference in Paris 2015

### 4.1 Targets and meaning of the conference

The United Nations Climate Conferences of the last years were fraught with stagnation and disillusionment. Although the acceptance of man-made climate change with increasing awareness of its potential dangers has in the meantime led the majority of countries, even those which for a long time assumed a rather critical attitude, to the conviction that it poses a severe threat to humankind, the willingness for international binding obligations is still low. In order to fully understand and value the meaning of the forthcoming conference, it is necessary to consider the development of the last years which led to the present situation.

The first Climate Conferences after the formulation of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 worked on the implementation and ratification process of the agreement. While at the beginning many nations, including the US and Australia, had signed the treaty, in the aftermath serious disputes arose. The US refused the ratification due to anxiety of economic consequences and special rights for developing and especially emerging countries. The American drawback nearly led to a collapse of the agreement as at least 55 states, which were responsible for more than 55% of GHG emissions of the 1990 level, had to agree to the Protocol (Kyoto Protocol 1998: Art.25). Therefore, in the following years other nations had to be persuaded to ratify the Protocol, e.g. Russia, which only joined the agreement after having reached some positive concessions in aspects as emissions trading. In 2011 the Protocol was ratified by 192 countries, only the US and the 2010 resigned Canada not participating (UNFCCC: Status of ratification of the Kyoto Protocol).

Since the enactment of the Kyoto Protocol in 2005 the United Nations Climate Conferences focused on formulating the post-2012 framework, when the first commitment period should have ended. Questions as how to deal in future with emissions of emerging countries and whether the Kyoto Protocol should just be extended by another commitment period with stricter emission reduction targets or instead replaced by a new treaty, arose (Bodansky 2010: 1).

The first noteworthy step to answer these issues was achieved at the UN Climate Conference in Bali 2007, when the Bali Road Map was compiled, containing the Bali Action Plan, whose goal was to *'launch a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012, in order to reach an agreed outcome and adopt a decision at its fifteenth session(...)'* (FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1: 3). This target, however, failed as the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen 2009 proved to be a disappointment. The parties were not able to decide upon a common structure, binding targets or a post-Kyoto scheme. The only appreciable outcome was the mention of the two-degree target,

which, however, was not legally binding but was only 'taken note of' by the nations (Bodansky 2010). One year later, at the UN Climate Conference in Cancún, the target was officially accepted. In addition, the parties consented to the goal of substantial emission reductions till 2050, the creation of a Green Climate Fund to finance climate protection projects in developing countries and a Climate Technology Centre to foster and offer technological support, as well as to a new agreement to forest conservation (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1: 3ff.). This conference was followed by some with stagnating results; the Green Climate Fund could not be realised in the following years, nor were the parties able to agree upon ambitious emission reduction schemes for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Besides the US and Canada, who were not part of the Kyoto Protocol, other nations as Russia, Japan or New Zealand were not willing to rise their obligations (UNFCCC: Doha amendment to the Kyoto Protocol). At the UN Climate Change Conference in Doha 2012 the nations decided to extend the Kyoto Protocol till 2020 and produced a schedule for the elaboration of a new treaty, which should be accomplished till 2015 and include all countries. The following conferences in Warsaw and Lima did not deliver substantive remarkable results but only produced declarations of intent and postponements to 2015.

The UN Climate Conference in Paris 2015 aims at finally establishing a new climate protection agreement which shall replace the Kyoto Protocol after 2020. As agreed upon at the Climate Conference in Doha three years before, 2015 is the deadline until which the new agreement shall be arranged. A failure of this scheme would not only torpedo the image of the UNFCCC and question it's potential, but also be a severe drawback for climate protection and make the achievement of the two degree target even more improbable.

According to the problematic precondition and multiple suspensions the expectations for the conference are ambivalent. On the one hand many experts regard it as one of the last chances to establish a follow-up agreement, on the other many people doubt whether the parties will be successful in finding understandings where they have failed the years before. The most pressing need will be the mediation between the demands of industrialised and developing countries on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities. The willingness of developing and emerging countries to contribute to emission reductions, relatively to their economic possibilities, has a great impact on the readiness of developed countries to burden the majority of responsibility. Implicit obligations, binding for all nations, are therefore indispensable in order to reach sufficient GHG reductions.

Besides this most basic target of negotiating binding emission reduction goals there are other issues to be solved at the conference, among them the question how to finance the, already in 2009

promised, 100 billion per annum destined for the support of developing countries and the fight against and adaptation to climate change (Weischer/ Kreft; Germanwatch 2014). Besides of the general importance to clear the funding of this sum, reliable securities may positively influence the willingness of developing countries to act and invest in climate protection. Another important issue that should be solved at the conference is the demand for more transparency and comparability, especially concerning emission quantities, as countries differ in the naming of polluting gases or reference years (Hendricks; FAZ 2015).

#### **4.2 Initial position at the Climate Conference in Lima 2014 and preparation process**

The target of the 20<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Conference in Lima was to prepare the new agreement on climate protection, which should be finalised in 2015. The preparation process did not prosper, as many nations had not elaborated, as requested one year before at the Climate Conference in Warsaw, an individual programme with obligations they would be ready to fulfill. Therefore, the conference ended with the Lima Call for Climate Action, a paper which defines the following steps necessary for a successful creation of a Post-Kyoto Protocol in Paris, and a draft negotiating text (FCCC/CP/2014/10/Add.1 2014).

During the conference the main objective of the EU and the US was to abolish the clear structure in for the climate change responsible and from the climate change suffering nations (Mihm 2014). A first compromise in this direction was reached as in the final document the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is still mentioned, but also the annotation that other nations are able to support the endeavours of the industrialised countries (FCCC/CP/2014/10/Add.1 2014: 9). Moreover, the parties were once more requested to hand in their intended contributions to emission reductions. These so called Intended Nationally Determined Contributions should be handed in by march and at the latest by october, with transparent and comprehensible propositions (FCCC/CP/2014/10/Add.1 2014: Art.13).

By July 22, 2015 19 nations and the European Union had handed in their INDC's, including China, Russia, the US and Canada (UNFCCC 2015: INDC), whose proposed commitments will shortly be presented in the following abstract. The US pronounced its intention to reduce the national GHG emission by 28% below the 2005 level till 2025 (UNFCCC: US INDC 2015). Experts assess this goal as not ambitious enough. Since the reduction target takes 2005 as reference year, the sum of 28% is misleading. Following on from 1990 the reduction target only lies around 17% (Climate Action Tracker 2015: USA). Moreover, the policies mentioned to achieve this goal are probably insufficient, only providing the achievement of the 2020 goals, while there are some doubts about

the feasibility of others, mainly due to the scepticism of the American Congress. In some fields, e.g. land-use emissions, predictions are unreliable, endangering the pledge's reachability (Evans 2015). Furthermore, the INDC does not deal with the topics adaptation or climate finance, for which many developing countries had asked for in order to gain security and assurance. Some experts, among them analysts of Greenpeace, have suggested that, theoretically, the US would be able to cut emissions lower and faster, achieving reductions of 40% by 2025 (ibid).

Russia intends to reduce GHG emissions by 25 till 30% to the 1990 level (UNFCCC: Russia INDC 2015). This declaration has to be valued with consideration of the Russian economic recession after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, which led to a decrease of anthropogenic pollution. The current goal to reduce GHG emissions by 25 till 30% to the 1990 level still allows the country a rise of carbon dioxide emission. The Russian government does not intend to reach the peak of emissions before 2030 and the named goals for 2030 are the same already mentioned for the period till 2020. Moreover, Russia possesses large forest areas, which filter around 500 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere each year (Yeo/ Evans 2015), and are also taken into account and positively influence the official amount of GHG emissions. Regarded in this light, Russia's INDC is not very ambitious. While it is legitimate that the country wants to re-establish its economy, the government would be able to invest more effort in climate protection and to announce stricter targets.

China has published its proposed endeavours by the end of June. They contain the target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by 60% to 65% percent from the 2005 level, to increase the share of non-fossil fuels to about 20% as well as the amount of forest. China is already the biggest investor of clean energy, accounting for nearly 29% of global investments, a number which shall be increased in the following years. However, GHG emissions will further rise, with the government aiming to reach the peak of pollution in 2030 (UNFCCC: China INDC 2015: 5). As the country is with 11 000 megatons of carbon dioxide the biggest contaminator of present times this means further pressure on the environment (The Climate Group 2015).

All in all the submitted INDCs mark an important development in international climate protection. For the first time all major pollutants seem willing to commit themselves to legally binding targets in order to combat climate change. With the US, China, Russia and the European Union some of the most important actors in the climate regime have pledged their targets. Especially the proposed commitments of the US and China are important, as these were in the past the vetoing states in the process, denying serious engagement. In addition, the involvement of Canada, a nation which had just recently resigned from the Kyoto Protocol, and China, as the leading emerging country, may have a positive effect, motivating and mobilizing other actors.

Besides the symbolic effect of the submitted INDCs there exist some doubts and issues with regard to their content. Many experts regard the present endeavours as insufficient in order to meet the two degree target, as the majority of important actors, including the US and China, contract minimal consensus. Accordingly, other nations have to increase their commitments if the superordinate target shall be accomplished (Evans 2015).

Apart from the demand to submit national INDCs, the Lima Call for Climate Action also structured the ongoing preparation process for the 21<sup>st</sup> UN Climate Conference. During the present year four subordinated conferences take place, in which the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action works on arrangements and the organisation of the negotiations in Paris.

The first minor conference took place in Geneva in the period from February 8 to 13. The participants reworked the draft negotiating text, but instead of shortening the version they extended it from 38 to 86 pages, giving delegates of every country the opportunity to add their own wishes. In many cases brackets indicate the undecided status of issues, and many repetitions and overlapping options emphasize the disability of the parties to make concessions to each other in order to reach an agreement (FCCC/ADP/2015/12015). While some observers criticize the enormous extensions, others praise the consideration of important, but in the past often ignored, topics, e.g. the importance of gender equality for climate protection. However, many contradictions and totally different approaches within the 86 pages illuminate the difficulties the nations will face in agreeing upon one final and binding version (Pötter 2015).

The second preliminary conference took place in Bonn from June 1 to 11, and its paramount task was to reduce the negotiating text, make it coherent and solve the 224 inconsistencies. In the end the delegates were only able to find an agreement for one of these problems, namely how deforestation and forest degradation influence the carbon balance of a country (Bojanowski 2015), while the others had to be postponed for the following conferences. Due to the stagnating result the attention turned from the UN delegates towards the national governments and national leaders. Many of them attempt to find compromises away from the UN conferences with numerous participants and delegates of all countries, and focus on intergovernmental consultations.

## **5. Preparation of the EU for the Climate Conference in Paris 2015**

### **5.1 The 2030 framework for climate and energy policies and the INDC**

The European Union prepared itself for the UN Climate Conference in Lima by generating the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies, which determines the environmental targets in the time period from 2020 to 2030. The framework was published on October 23, 2014 and its summarized version was submitted as INDC on March 6, 2015.

After prolonged negotiations the 28 member states agreed upon domestic greenhouse gas reductions of at least 40% compared to the level of 1990. This binding target shall be achieved jointly, meaning that some countries commit themselves to stricter reductions than others (European Council/SN 79/14 2014). Moreover, the European Union aims to increase the share of renewable energies as well as energy efficiency to at least 27%, enabled through less energy intensive industry and architecture, with the option to raise the target to 30% in 2020 (European Commission 15.07.2015). One of the major instruments to reduce GHG emissions is the European emissions trading system, which was agreed to be strengthened and reformed, amongst other things by an instrument called market stability reserve, which counteracts a surplus of emission allowances and makes the system more effective (ibid).

The negotiations to the 2030 framework had proved to be difficult. Different initial positions with regard to environmental and climate protection policies, diverse economic preconditions and public opinions impeded an agreement. While some countries, e.g. France or Germany, advocated stricter regulations and more ambitious reduction targets, which had already been implemented on national levels, other actors as Poland or Great Britain had impeded the negotiations (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 24.10.2014). Especially the pillar renewable energies was intensively discussed. Many experts had hoped for a more ambitious target than the final 27%, but reasons as economic development or, for example in the case of Poland, an industry based upon coal, were detaining (ibid).

The INDC submitted by the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its 28 member states on March 06, 2015 bases upon the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies. As introduction it contains the European commitment to the two degree target and the UN climate negotiations. Besides of the announcement of the binding target to reduce GHG emissions by 40% to the level of 1990, the submission includes information about the scope of affected greenhouse gases and the planned process of policy implementations regarding, for example, forestry, land use or agriculture. Furthermore, the Union offers some basic information about the current state of emission reduction, which amount 19% compared to the level of 1990, the simultaneous growth of

GDP by 44 % and the resulting decreased average per capita emission. In addition to the mention of past achievements and present goals the Commission also emphasizes it's long-term goal to reduce emissions by 80 to 95% until 2050. At the end of the INDC the Commission appeals to other nations to submit their commitments by the end of march 2015, the optimal time frame set on the Climate Conference in Lima, and emphasizes the need of fair, transparent and clear targets (UNFCCC: European Union INDC).

## **5.2 European contribution during preliminary international conferences and the preparation process**

The annual UN Climate Conferences are the climax of environmental negotiations and receive high public attention. However, there are other international and intergovernmental meetings, some also hold by the UN in preparation for the next major conference, others organised by individual states or other institutions, which have a strong impact on the international climate regime. The European Union is involved in nearly all of them, thereby influencing the negotiations, the public and the media by it's appearance and giving evidence about the own attitude. International conferences, therefore, offer an opportunity to foster the own approach, mobilize other countries and support negotiations. In the following the European contributions to international conferences as well as public statements with regard to the Climate Conference in Paris will be investigated.

In the run-up to the Climate Conference in Lima 2014 the European Union declared it's expectations and goals, while confirming the necessity to work towards the realisation of the two degree target. The main European demands for the Conference included an understanding about the central points for a global follow-up treaty created in Paris 2015. In order to achieve this the EU emphasized the necessity to establish a resolution which makes national efforts more transparent and comparable. Moreover, leading politicians demanded that national propositions with binding commitments should be submitted early in 2015 so that the question whether the efforts are sufficient for the feasibility of the two degree target can be scientifically answered. Apart from these expectations the EU also underlined the own endeavours undertaken to foster climate protection, particularly by naming the agreement upon the aimed emission reductions within the European Union and the financial provision for developing countries in the combat of climate change (European Commission 28.11. 2014). During and after the conference European politicians emphasized that the EU had hoped for a more ambitious outcome and had worked hard in order to mediate between opposing parties, thereby demonstrating the own readiness for stricter regulations and turning responsibility and need for action towards blocking nations (European Commission,

12.12.2014).

In the months following the Climate Conference in Lima the European Union kept on informing about the own progress in the creation of the INDC and stressing out it's demands for other actors, e.g. by declaring it's expectation that *'countries [...] keep to the agreed timetable and come forward with ambitious proposed emissions reductions targets [...] by the end of the first quarter of 2015'* (European Commission 06.02.2015). Furthermore, the European Commission published the EU's vision for a new agreement, which contains the specific criteria the Union expects the Paris agreement to fulfill. According to the paper the EU demands the creation of a legal framework, applicable for all countries, with transparent, fair and ambitious targets for whose implementation the actors are publicly hold responsible. These targets have to be set individually, dependent on national and economic circumstances, and should regularly be reviewed and strengthened with regard to the realisation of the two degree target. The agreement should also contain a long-term target with climate goals until half of the century and with the vision to cut emissions by at least 60% till 2050 (European Commission 25.02.2015).

In addition, the EU disclosed it's anticipation for the conferences of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action in Geneva and Bonn, thereby putting the delegates under pressure to refine and improve the negotiating text (European Commission 06.02.2015).

Moreover, the Union informs about internal environmental policies, which are not necessarily included in the INDC but part of its realisation. One example is the newly created Energy Union, through which the 28 single energy markets were integrated into one, leading to a low-carbon society through the promotion of renewable energies, energy efficiency and the advancement of technologies (European Commission 25.02.2015).

Besides of public statements about expectations and own endeavours the European Union is also involved in many international conferences apart from the UN Climate Conferences. The 6<sup>th</sup> Petersberg Climate Dialogue, established to improve the annual preparation for the UN Climate Conference, was organised by Germany and France and emphasizes the intensity with which European members advocate an ambitious and successful international agreement. Besides praise of international efforts, especially from developing and emerging countries, as well as the reminder of already mentioned important pillars for the treaty, the Dialogue focused on Climate Change Financing and the implementation of non-governmental approaches (BMUB 19.05.2015).

Further insights in the European attitude towards environmental and climate protection was given at the G7 Summit in Elmau, Germany, where the Union was represented by Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy as well as by the Presidents of the European Council and of the European Commission. During the Summit climate protection was one of the major topics, steered by the



German Presidency, whose focusing on climate change had been announced by German Chancellor Angela Merkel some days before, who declared that the preparation of the UN Climate Conference during the G7 Summit was an issue close to her heart (Süddeutsche Zeitung 29.05.2015). Due to the fact that Germany had in earlier conferences promoted climate protection, and that Great Britain, Italy, France and Germany, contrary to the other three nations, had achieved emission reductions over the last decades, the European countries led the discussion (German Missions in the US 03.06.2015). The participants corroborated their intention to achieve a binding international agreement at the UN Climate Conference in Paris and affirmed their own commitments. Besides, they were able to agree upon internal targets, declaring that *'deep cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions are required with a decarbonisation of the global economy over the course of this century'* (Leader's Declaration G7 Summit 2015: 15).

### **5.3 Evaluation of current climate protection endeavours of the EU**

The commitments and efforts invested by the European Union in climate protection are difficult to assess. Self-imposed targets and the attitude within international conferences have not only to be valued independently on economic and political preconditions, but also in the international comparison and measured by environmental needs.

The present climate protection targets, consisting of the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies, offer potential for ambivalent discussions. On the one hand the proposed 40% emission reductions compared to the 1990 level within the period of 2020 to 2030, attended by binding increases of renewable energy and energy efficiency by at least 27%, represent an obvious enhancement of commitments compared to the 2020 Package, which is composed of 20% emission reductions and 20% improvement of renewable energy and energy efficiency, respectively. Nevertheless, the 2030 framework, whose content is basis of the INDC submitted by the European Commission, has received mixed feedback by many experts, political opposition and non-governmental organisations. The commitment is sufficient to realise a global emission reduction of 60% by 2050, provided with the improbable case that all countries worldwide would participate to the same amount in the endeavours of climate protection. However, a more ambitious target, the feasibility of reducing global warming to 1.5 degrees, still mentioned as a desirable option in documents of the UNFCCC (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1: 3), would hardly be possible with an emission reduction of 40% till 2030 (Evans 2015). Furthermore, the unspecific nature of the policies regarding forestry, land use and agriculture have been critically reviewed, as their vagueness leaves the opportunity that the European Union will count on the promotive effect of

forests, reducing carbon dioxide, which would decrease the ambitious type of its INDC (ibid). The internal compromise to increase renewable energy and energy efficiency by only 27% has also been criticised as too undemanding, while the continuous focus of countries like Poland on coal energy affected the authenticity of the Union. Despite of these drawbacks, when compared with the national commitments of other major economies as the US, Russia or China, the European Union has submitted the commitment with the highest targets.

Contemplating the appearance of the European Union in international negotiations a leading tendency can be noticed. The European Union acts in many cases as role model, has declared its climate protection target even before the Climate Conference in Lima and was after Switzerland the second actor to submit the INDC (UNFCCC: INDC as communicated by parties), which is in most parts transparent and easily comprehensible. Its reliable character has become some slight marks due to the unclear nature of the accountability of forest decarbonisation. Moreover, the internal differences, especially with regard to the dimension and ambition of the 2030 framework, made the union appear inconsistent and inhomogeneous.

In negotiations the European Union tries to foster agreements and effective collaboration. Regularly calls for action to other nations, e.g. for the submission of transparent and comprehensible INDCs, or declared expectations to the Paris agreement, emphasize the serious engagement of the European Union and may have a mobilizing and motivating effect upon other actors. The initiation of the Petersberg Climate Dialogue by Germany, this year organised together with the UNFCCC host nation France, further underlines European commitment to a successful outcome in Paris. The ambitious declaration of the G7 nations concerning climate protection, where four actors are members of the European Union, emphasizes the leading European status in the international climate regime.

All in all it can be stated that the European Union has involved itself creditably in the preparation process for the UN Climate Conference in Paris. The own, relatively ambitious emission targets, reliable conduct in international negotiations, the endeavours to foster progress through calls for action and the organisation of intergovernmental meetings, e.g. in the case of the Petersberg Climate Dialogue, as well as the attempt to lead the way as role model as occurred at the G7 Summit, demonstrate the engagement the Union shows towards climate protection as well as its leading quality. Nevertheless, the European Union would have been able to provide a clearer signal for climate protection by committing itself with higher emission reduction targets, capable to realise a limitation of global warming to 1.5 degree. The present targets are appropriate but lack ambition and visionary initiative, which would have made the European Union to the incontestable leader of climate protection and, perhaps, motivated and mobilized the whole regime.

#### **5.4 Assessment of the present form of leadership practised by the EU in the international climate regime**

After having reached the conclusion that the European Union assumes the role of leadership, though a moderate one, within the international preparation process to the UN Climate Conference 2015, it's efforts can be valued based on the criteria by Alexandra Lindenthal's theoretical work in order to determine the form of leadership.

At the beginning it has to be investigated which *interest* the EU has in participating in the international climate regime. The main interest, often declared by the Union, is to limit global warming to two degrees in order to prevent irreversible and dramatic natural consequences for humankind. Since 2007 this target has continuously been emphasized by the Union and represents the introduction of the INDC submitted to the UN (UNFCCC: European Union INDC). The European Union regards climate change to be a challenge only possible to deal with through common global action, as stated by EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete, who declared that '*every big economic power has to make a contribution*' (European Commission 28.11.2014). Accordingly, the European Union regards climate protection as a necessary interest of the whole regime, whose realisation would be a universal benefit.

Regarding the indicator *norms* the European Union is willing to rethink and revise them in the course of common negotiations. This attitude becomes apparent on the example of the principle 'common but differentiated responsibilities', which had been supported by the Union since the 1980s. Due to changed circumstances as the rise of emerging countries, e.g. China, India or Brasil, with economic improvements on the one and high environmental pollution on the other hand, as well as the realisation of the dimension of global warming and it's probable consequences, the European Union has altered it's attitude and now promotes a suspension of the clear structure in for the climate change responsible and from the climate change suffering nations (Mihm 2014).

The European Union's *form of communication* varies between agreement-orientated and compromise-orientated. Principally agreement-orientated the Union is open for discussion and different approaches and solution proposals. The support of the INDCs, which represent a new strategy in generating an international agreement, as, contrary to the Kyoto Protocol, all members are able to communicate their individual commitments, demonstrate the general preference for agreement-orientated solutions. However, it can be expected that in a situation of discordance during the negotiations the EU would rather agree to reach a moderate compromise than to face a failure, as it had been the case during the Kyoto Protocol negotiations, in which the EU had to sanction far less ambitious emission reduction targets as it had hoped for (Schreurs/ Tiberghien 2007: 20).

The European Union tries to enforce its targets and the realisation of an international agreement by employing soft *power*. Its regularly calls for action during the preparation process of the UN Climate Conference do not only lead public attention towards present drawbacks but also put other actors under pressure to improve the own efforts. Furthermore, the Union tries to fulfill the part of a role model by committing itself to relatively ambitious emission reduction targets and by being a reliable actor who respects time frames, accords and principles as transparency (UNFCCC: European Union INDC).

The *resources* the European Union uses to employ soft power include the offering of information, expertise and management or organisation, the last visible in the initiation of the Petersberg Climate Dialogue or the G7 Summit 2015. Besides these immaterial resources the EU uses some aspects of material resources, for example the financial means to host conferences as the above named Climate Dialogue or the G7 Summit.

The evaluation of the five indicators established by Lindenthal leads to the conclusion that the European Union performs the role of a problem-solving leadership. It regards climate protection as a matter of collective interest, uses immaterial and some slightly material resources in order to foster its soft power, is open-minded towards the opinion of other actors, willing to question the own norms in the course of changing external circumstances and mainly supports an agreement-orientated form of communication.

## 6. Conclusion

For almost three decades the European Union has belonged to the most important actors in the international climate regime. Since 1986 the Union has dealt actively with the topic of global warming, played a significant role in the realisation of the Kyoto Protocol and has been in many cases the leading figure, which called for more ambitious targets or acted as role model to other industrialised countries.

At the beginning of the assignment the question of the European Union's role in the present preparation process to the UN Climate Conference 2015 was posed, coupled with the aim to evaluate its effort. After a close observation of the demeanour and commitments of the European Union it was possible to state that it still represents a leading actor in the climate regime, as it tries to foster negotiations, commits itself with relatively high targets and tries to mobilize other nations. On the basis of this conclusion the form of leadership fulfilled by the European Union was specified, considering Lindenthal's theory with four different kinds of leadership. Taking into account their indicators it was possible to characterise the European Union's specific role as a problem-solving leadership. Accordingly, the aforementioned hypothesis that the EU assumes a leading role in the preparation process to the UN Climate Conference can be confirmed.

Despite of the result that the European Union still fulfills the position of a leader, its present efforts can be assessed ambivalently. On the one hand the Union has posed the strongest commitments to emission reduction, fosters the negotiations by continuous calls for actions, the formulation of expectations and the rise of international attention towards needs and drawbacks. Moreover, the Union is host of some important preparation conferences, including the Climate Conferences in Bonn, the Petersberg Climate Dialogue or the G7 Summit 2015. These positive aspects stand in contrast to the obvious lack of ambition the Union shows towards climate protection. Although its emission targets are, in absolute terms, the most ambitious and its participation in the process unimpeachable, a strong commitment with visionary, passionate goals is missing. In contrast to the European leadership of past years and negotiations, e.g. around the turn of the millennium, when the EU fought for the realisation of the Kyoto Protocol, the effort seems halfhearted and without real motivation. Instead of targeting a limitation of global warming to 1.5 degrees the EU aims, from the beginning, only the realisation of the two degree target. Internal discrepancies and compromises as the agreement to increase the amount of renewable energies to merely 27% further demonstrate a lack of engagement to the topic.

All in all the European Union still is an important actor in the climate regime and, until now, the leading figure amongst the nations. In the preparation process to the UN Climate Conference in

Paris 2015 it adopts a key role and fosters negotiations, commitments as well as the communication between the parties. However, the EU has lost much of it's progressive spirit and could loose it's status as leader once other major actors as the US or China begin, as they have already indicated, to seriously engage themselves with climate protection.

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