

Gabriel: Decision by the Environment Council is a historic step for climate protection

Today the Environment Council, meeting in Brussels under the German Presidency, adopted ambitious climate protection goals up to 2020 and an EU negotiation package for a post-2012 climate protection agreement. "With the adoption of climate protection goals and the negotiation package, the EU has reaffirmed its leading role in climate protection. This is a signal to the international community that the EU wants to make a fair and appropriate contribution in the framework of an international climate protection agreement. This is a historic step forward, enabling us to break the deadlock at international level", stated Minister Gabriel, who led the ministerial meeting as current Chair of the Council.

According to the decision by the European environment ministers, the EU aims to commit itself, as part of an international climate protection agreement, to a 30% reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 (compared with 1990). Until a new agreement is concluded, and without prejudice to its position in international negotiations, the EU will reduce its emissions by at least 20% by 2020 (compared with 1990). "This is a clear signal to industry that European emissions trading will continue beyond 2012. And it is a clear signal to enterprises that they should continue investing in energy-saving and efficient technologies", commented Minister Gabriel.

"Industrialised countries bear a particular responsibility regarding climate protection and must therefore remain at the forefront of efforts beyond 2012. The EU's goal for the international negotiations is that industrialised countries commit themselves to a total reduction of 30% in their emissions by 2020 compared with 1990. This also includes the USA.

An international post-2012 climate regime will have to provide greater incentives for fully exploiting existing reduction potential. This requires improved energy efficiency, the expansion of renewable energies and the promotion of technological innovations both in developing and industrialised countries", stated Minister Gabriel.