

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



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Report: Visit to Brussels of California Governor Jerry Brown - 7-9 November 2017

Summary

Governor of California, Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown (Democrat), visited Brussels as part of a 10-day European tour, including later stops in Oslo and then Bonn for the COP23 UN climate conference. Highlights of his Brussels stop include high profile public events, meetings at the European Parliament and bilateral meetings with **Vice President Šefčovič and Commissioners Arias Cañete and Vella**.

As the governor of the world's 6th largest economy by GDP, he has driven California's impressive record on climate mitigation actions (including on fuel economy standards, a cap-and-trade system and electric vehicle-friendly policies) and ambitious targets, including 50% electricity generation from renewables by 2030. He is a co-founder of the US Climate Alliance, comprising so far of 15 US states committing to engage in climate action, as well as a co-founder, with Michael Bloomberg, of the "America's Pledge" movement" to compile and quantify the actions of states, cities and enterprises towards Paris Agreement implementation. California is a co-originator, together with Baden-Wurttemberg, of the "Under2 Coalition", now co-signed by 188 local jurisdictions around the world.

During his appearances in public and at the European Parliament, Gov. Brown emphasised the urgent and existential nature of the climate change threat and its effects on California (referring to the droughts and wildfires) and worldwide. He drew the connections between climate, environment, biodiversity, health, security and migration issues. Notably, he stressed the need for vision and the change of values by all countries and at all levels of society that will be needed to drive the energy transition and implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

His visit is notable for the 7 November announcement of an EU-California agreement to step up cooperation on emissions trading and zero-carbon transportation, following a bilateral meeting with Commissioner Arias Cañete. On carbon markets, the EU and California will hold regular political and technical dialogues on the design and implementation of their carbon markets, including cooperation with other carbon markets, such as those in China.

Comment

Following the US announcement of withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, this charismatic four-term Democratic governor is **becoming an important climate action rallying point for state-level and other sub-federal administrations in the US, and also much further afield**.

Gov. Brown was also named **Special Advisor for States and Regions** ahead of this year's COP23 in Bonn by **Fijian Prime Minister (and COP23 President) Frank Bainimarama** and he is expected to attend **President Macron's** climate mobilisation summit in Paris on 12 December 2017. In September 2018, reportedly with UN sponsorship, the State of California will convene the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco, which will bring together representatives from subnational governments, business and civil society in support of the Paris Agreement.

Service Européen pour l'Action Extérieure, B-1046 Bruxelles / Europese dienst voor extern optreden, B-1046 Brussel - Belgium.
Telephone: (32-2) 584 11 11.
Office: EEAS. Telephone: direct line (32-2) +32 2 584 [REDACTED]

<http://eeas.europa.eu/>
E-mail: [REDACTED]@eeas.europa.eu

This development might constitute an opportunity for a welcome coalescence of the multitude of climate-related initiatives at state/provincial and municipal level, with business and civil society. In addition to those named above, these include "We Are Still In", the Climate Mayors coalition, Global Covenant of Mayors, C-40, and many more.

Jerry Brown's role at the centre of these developments makes him **a powerful ally in the US for EU climate diplomacy**. Moreover, the **potential linking of the emissions trading schemes of the EU, China and N. America** (California, Quebec and possibly Ontario and others) would constitute an important advance in the global fight against climate change.

Detail

Tuesday 7 November 2017

High-Level Conference on Clean-Energy Finance: This public conference was hosted at the European Parliament and opened by **President Tajani, Governor Brown, Vice President Katainen and Werner Hoyer, President of the EIB. Vice President Šefčovič and Commissioner Arias Cañete** also made introductory remarks on the progress of European climate and energy policies. In his main contribution, Gov. Brown emphasised the urgent and existential nature of the climate change threat, how it is affecting California (CA) and other regions, including the Arctic, and made the connections between climate, environment, biodiversity, health, security and migration issues. While acknowledging the importance of public and private investment and the availability of capital, he stressed the need for vision and the change of values that will have to drive the transition, if the challenge is to be met. He outlined the progress of CA in achieving 50% zero carbon energy generation (of which 27% is renewables) and the target of 50% renewables by 2030. Energy efficiency, including via building standards, introduction of electric vehicles and a cap-and-trade system for emissions are among the tools being employed. He mentioned prominently the linking of the CA emissions trading scheme with that of Quebec and the desire to do so with others, including Ontario and the EU ETS system.

Bilateral meetings: Gov. Brown met with **Vice President Šefčovič and Commissioner Arias Cañete** in separate meetings. The meeting with Commissioner Arias Cañete led to the aforementioned announcement on carbon markets and clean transportation. With Vice President Šefčovič, Gov. Brown discussed the issue of how to standardise measurements of greenhouse emissions on a global scale, coordination during the preparations of the next Clean Energy Ministerial and plans for the September 2018 Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco. Gov. Brown also asked about climate action progress within the EU Member States.

Wednesday 8 November 2017

"Climate Cooperation and the Way Forward after the Paris Climate Agreement" - Exchange of Views with Governor of California Jerry Brown: Gov. Brown held an exchange of views at the European Parliament with the Committee on the Environment (ENVI), chaired by **MEPs Adina Ioana Vălean and Christian Ehler**, with a focus on California's policies to fight climate change and on the possible lessons for Europe. The Governor acknowledged the global entity of climate change even if its effects were felt at the local level, as experienced by California itself with summer droughts. As such, the local level was key in addressing the issue: he referred to CA measures against climate change including the cap-and-trade programme, fuel standards, the target of achieving 50% renewables by 2030 and energy efficiency. He also referred to the "Under2 Coalition" as an example of consensus-building among different levels of government. Nevertheless, he conceded that California could not meet such as an existential threat alone: bold actions by many should be taken all around the world to foster the transition to new energy sources and bring about new technologies in transports.

In their interventions, MEPs highlighted the efforts of the EU in the fight against climate change, expressing their views to continue collaborating with California. **Miriam Dalli MEP** (S&D, Malta) asked the governor what the future of the Paris Agreement would be with the US refusing to join. **Jeppe Kofod MEP** (S&D, Denmark) praised the role of regions and cities. **Gerber-Jan**

Gerbrandy MEP (ALDE, the Netherlands) asked the Governor which steps could be taken in order to reduce the EU's dependency on fossil fuels. **Claude Turmes MEP** (Greens/EFA, Luxembourg) and **Bas Eickhout MEP** (Greens/EFA, the Netherlands) addressed the Diesel scandal and California's green vehicles programme. **Jacqueline Foster MEP** (ECR, UK) called on the US to join the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSA). Finally, **Anja Hazekamp MEP** (GUE/NGL, the Netherlands) raised concerns on the contribution of animal farming to climate change.

Governor Jerry Brown agreed with the existence of a "fossil fuels addiction" and quoted the California cap-and-trade law, remarking that it had contributed to increase efficiency. He also recalled the zero-emissions programme, proposing it as an example of bold political action: it had been implemented in California without the approval of then President Bush, and since then it had spread around the US. He argued zero-emission cars would become a necessity in the market, as they would outcompete combustion engines. This also meant, he argued, moving beyond voluntary agreements by starting to push corporations to make commitments. The Governor also agreed with the importance of cities and regions, wishing that COP23 would officially give them more recognition. Concerning aviation, he welcomed the US joining CORSA. He then concluded with the necessity to address the factors that forced migration, such as climate change, instead of waiting to manage migration, and to contribute to reduce the emissions coming from the dairy industry, finding some ways to internalise the costs of CO₂ emissions into the price of finished goods.

Thursday 9 November 2017

German Marshall Fund (GMF) public event - "A Conversation with Governor Jerry Brown": In response to questions from the moderator, **Dr Ian Lesser** of GMF and members of the audience, Gov. Brown elaborated on the next steps to be taken in the framework of the Paris Agreement and highlighted the need to concretely define each party's individual contributions. The urgently needed transformation to a no-carbon economy requires investment, political leadership and collaboration. Regarding the challenge of bringing together and managing the manifold action on climate change Gov. Brown referred to the Global Climate Action Summit that will bring together representatives of the Under2 Coalition in San Francisco in September 2018. Gov. Brown stated that legislative procedures and accumulating evidence on global warming limit President Trump's scope in his decisions on climate change. Further, he stressed that the President's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement is only one issue in the all-encompassing problem of climate change. Concerning trade, FTAs need to consider and integrate environmental implications. Touching also upon the significance of nuclear threats, Gov. Brown underscored that existential threats require dialogue and discussion. In his replies to questions raised by the audience Gov. Brown expressed his confidence that carbon costs as already in place in CA will be introduced globally, acknowledged the crucial role of non-state actors in fighting climate change and referred to the implications of climate change for indigenous people.

Bilateral meeting: Commissioner Vella met with Gov. Brown in an exchange that included consideration of respective oceans and fisheries policies and strategies on the production, use and disposal of plastics. Both agreed to follow up on these discussions.

Contact:

██████████ Telephone:(32-2) +32 2 584 ██████████@eeas.europa.eu