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MENA NGOs call on European leaders to adopt a strong climate and energy package for post-2020

Press release on the occasion of the open letter to the 28 EU heads of government

17 March 2014. One week prior to the European Council of 20/21 March 22 civil society organizations of 9 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries urge the EU heads of government to regain the EU's former climate leadership by backing progressive 2030 climate and energy targets.

In the past the EU's energy and climate policy has encouraged political leaders across the MENA region to prioritize the development of renewable energy. Furthermore it has strengthened the commitment of many Southern Mediterranean countries to pursue the prospects of exporting and exchanging green electricity with EU member states. However, the recently proposed EU climate and energy package severely breaks with its 2020 precursor and lacks the initiative to drive transformational change in the EU, the MENA region, or anywhere else in the world. For the European neighbourhood of the MENA region this is of great concern.

Faouzi Mamouri, the director of WWF North Africa comments: "It seems that the EU is taking a step back on climate action. This is an extremely discouraging signal for the whole region. Civil Society in North Africa is strongly advocating for renewable energies and fighting climate change."

Safa al Jayoussi of Greenpeace Mediterranean says: "If the EU does not move forward with a strong commitment in its climate and energy policy it will lose its prominent voice on low-carbon development. The current weak proposal of the European Commission will not encourage political leaders of our region to agree on an ambitious post-2020 climate regime."

El Mostafa Jamea from the NGO AERDDS of Morocco, the country most interested to export parts of its green electricity to the EU, adds: „Without a strong and binding EU renewable energy target considerably above the business as usual scenario, there will be little motivation in the MENA region to hold on to the idea of electricity exchange with our European neighbours. The EU's promises to promote cooperation on renewable energy within the trans-Mediterranean Solar Plan would fail."

With the UN climate summit in Paris less than two years away, the 22 MENA NGOs therefore call on the EU's leaders to use the European Council on climate and energy on 20/21 March 2014 to pave the way for an ambitious climate agreement that would reflect scientific consensus and meet climate equity challenges.

"The EU can demonstrate to the international community its credibility and willingness to play a leading role at the UN climate negotiations only by backing three binding 2030 targets for emissions reduction, renewable energy and energy efficiency", says Patricia Sfeir of the Lebanese NGO Indyact.

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