Statement by Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal, on the announcement to postpone the COP26

Brussels, 1 April 2020

We take note of today's announcement by the UK Presidency that the COP26 will be postponed amid efforts to contain the coronavirus pandemic, and that the Presidency will now consult on the most appropriate date to reschedule it.

On behalf of the European Commission, I want to assure the UK COP26 Presidency, the UNFCCC, Italy as the host of the pre-COP and all of our international partners and civil society, of our strong commitment to making a success of COP26 and to delivering the European Green Deal which we announced in December 2019 in the interest of the health of our economy and our people.

We acknowledge that global diplomatic activity is currently slowed down by the coronavirus crisis. And we understand that this decision is taken to avoid that COP26 would fail to meet expectations as a result of insufficient participation. This makes sense.

As for the European Commission, we will not slow down our work domestically or internationally to prepare for an ambitious COP26, when it takes place. At home, we have put in place the key EU laws to meet our existing 2030 climate and energy targets. In the long-term, we have committed to climate neutrality by 2050 and proposed a climate law that will make this objective legally binding. The legislative work on this proposal has started, even in these challenging circumstances.

The work that the Commission is doing to present by September 2020 an impact assessed plan to raise the EU’s 2030 ambitions and cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50-55% compared to 1990 levels is on track, and the Commission will stick to that. The same goes for the work necessary to submit an enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution to the UNFCCC in line with our commitment under the Paris Agreement.

We will also continue to work intensively through all available channels with our partners around the world to share our plans and to encourage them to raise ambition too, and to work together on other key elements of the global climate agenda, like sustainable finance and adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change.

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