



PARLAIMINT NA hEORPA

Feisire de Pharlaimint na hEorpa

Lynn Boylan MEP
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Taoiseach Leo Varadkar,
Department of the Taoiseach
Merrion St.
Dublin 2

07.03.2019

Re: European Council Meeting 21st and 22nd March - *Clean Planet for All*

Dear Taoiseach,

I am writing to you concerning the upcoming European Council on 21st and 22nd March 2019, where heads of state and government of EU Member States are expected to give political guidance on the European Commission's long-term climate strategy, *Clean Planet for All*, which was published on 28th November 2018. This strategy aims to achieve a carbon-neutral economy by 2050 to combat climate change, as required under the Paris Agreement, and presents eight scenarios for achieving this goal. In your role as Taoiseach, I urge you to faithfully represent the concerns of the people of Ireland in relation to climate change and advocate for an ambitious and effective decarbonisation strategy.

In January 2018, you addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg, where you were questioned on Ireland's climate record. You made the admission that Ireland is a climate laggard, but also gave a hopeful message that you wish to move away from this reputation. Over a year later, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Special Report has noted that combatting climate change within the next 12 years will require "rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society", while Ireland's record on climate has not substantially changed. The Irish government has, in the past, played a negative role in the formation of EU climate policy, looking for loopholes and keeping ambition low. Now is an opportunity for you to demonstrate that there has been a shift in Ireland's approach, marking determined steps from the Irish government to increase climate ambition at EU level.

The strategy presented by the Commission falls short in many respects; particularly in how only two of the eight scenarios presented would actually achieve carbon-neutrality by 2050. I am calling on you to advocate the 1.5LIFE scenario, which is the only scenario that represents the necessary ambition for keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. The people of Ireland expect nothing less than this, and we do not want to hear excuses in this time of climate chaos. You, as Taoiseach, now have a chance at this European Council meeting to renew Ireland's climate diplomacy and dispel our reputation as climate laggards, advocating for much stronger climate ambition within this strategy and for the revision of the EU's 2030 NDC.

Kindest regards,

Lynn Boylan MEP