

Monthly Report on Research and Policy Developments - Energy and Climate Change

November 2016

Purpose: This document provides a summary of recent key developments in policy and research relating to energy and climate change. It has been prepared by the [ClimateXChange](#) Secretariat and is intended to keep Scottish policymakers informed of issues relevant to the Scottish Government's Energy and Climate Change policy portfolio.

International Climate and Energy Policy

COP22 Marrakech

The 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP22) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in Marrakech from 7 - 19 November 2016. With the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on 4 November, this was also the first meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 1).

Parties agreed to set out details for meeting the overarching goals of the Paris Agreement by 2018, with a review of progress in 2017. COP22 defined the issues at stake and outlined the work needed to resolve them by the 2018 deadline.

There were some notable outcomes from this COP. On finance, countries were urged to continue scaling up their financial contributions towards the agreed \$100bn a year by 2020 target and to achieve greater balance between adaptation and mitigation. There was some discussion over the Adaptation Fund, which serves the Kyoto Protocol but which many have argued should be moved over to the Paris Agreement. The issue will be taken up again in 2017.

A five-year work plan on loss and damage¹ was approved and will start in 2017, seeing countries starting to formally address climate impacts that are beyond adaptation, such as migration.

Remaining unresolved and unassigned are some 'orphan issues' under the Paris Agreement, which include important issues such as common timeframes for future climate pledges, and a new goal for climate finance.

The [IISD](#) and [Carbon Brief](#) have produced detailed summaries of COP22's key outcomes.

The official outcomes of the COP can be found on the [UNFCCC website](#).

US Presidential Election

Examples of commentary made on what the election of Donald Trump may mean for US and international climate change and energy policy below:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/news/trumping-progress-or-clintons-clean-opportunity-the-future-of-us-climate-policy-after-the-elections/>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/11/donald-trump-paris-climate-agreement/>

¹ http://unfccc.int/adaptation/workstreams/loss_and_damage/items/6056.php

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/news/what-energy-and-climate-change-policies-can-we-expect-from-president-trump/>

http://www.theecologist.org/blogs_and_comments/commentators/2988332/dont_despair_about_trump_and_climate_change.html

Clean Energy for All Europeans

The European Commission has [announced](#) a package of measures to keep the European Union competitive as the clean energy transition changes global energy markets. The Commission wants the EU to lead the clean energy transition, not only adapt to it. For this reason the EU has committed to cut CO₂ emissions by at least 40% by 2030 while modernising the EU's economy and delivering on jobs and growth for all European citizens. The proposals have three goals: putting energy efficiency first, achieving global leadership in renewables and providing a fair deal for consumers.

UK Climate and Energy Policy

UK ratifies Paris Agreement

On 17 November, after no objections were raised in Parliament, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson [ratified the Paris Agreement](#) on behalf of the UK Government. Greg Clark, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Nick Hurd, Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry welcomed the ratification.

Review of UK Energy Policy

The UK Energy Research Centre released a [Review of UK Energy Policy](#) in advance of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and the forthcoming Industrial Strategy and Emissions Reduction Plan (to be published by the end of February 2017). The authors warn that without action now, investor confidence will fail to recover and the UK will fail to meet its legally binding emissions targets.

Autumn Statement 2016

Chancellor Philip Hammond delivered his first [autumn statement](#) on 23 November. Climate change did not feature as a high priority issue in the statement with key policy decisions relating to the UK's low carbon future being delayed until future budgets. Announcements of interest included: maintaining the cap on the carbon price floor; investment in ultra-low emissions vehicles; and, investment in flood defences and resilience measures. The statement did not offer clarity on the future of the Levy Control Framework (LCF). It promised additional resources for communities affected by shale gas exploration in the UK through the Shale Wealth Fund.

Leaving the EU: negotiation priorities for energy and climate change policy inquiry

The Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee is seeking [written submissions](#) on the implications of the UK's departure from the EU on the energy sector and the UK's climate change commitments. The inquiry aims to determine which policy areas should be prioritised for continued cooperation during the exit negotiation process.

UK Phase Out of Coal

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has [announced](#) its consultation on coal generation in Great Britain. The Government seeks views on approaches to put into effect the closure of unabated coal power station by 2025.

States and Regions Compact Report

Scotland has been praised for its progress on reducing carbon emissions in the [Compact of States and Regions 2016 Disclosure Report](#), released on 1 December 2016. Scotland is mentioned as leading a group of Governments that have achieved their 2020 target several years early.

Climate Science, Impacts and Adaptation

2016 Hottest Year on Record

The World Meteorological Organisation released its [provisional statement](#) on 2016 to inform the UN climate change conference, COP22. The statement shows that it is very likely that 2016 will be the hottest year on record with temperatures even higher than record-breaking temperatures in 2015. Global temperatures for January to September 2016 were approximately 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels and 0.88°C above the average for the 1961 – 1990 reference period. The final statement on 2016 will be released in early 2017.

Danish and American researchers monitoring satellites and Arctic weather stations have also [reported](#) air temperatures peaking 20°C higher than normal for the time of year.

UK Winter Floods 2015/2016

The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, in collaboration with the British Hydrological Society, has released a [study](#) reviewing the winter floods of 2015/2016 in the UK. The study shows that many existing rainfall and seasonal temperature records were eclipsed during the period beginning early-November 2015 and lasting around 14 weeks. The extent and duration of flooding during this time period has very few close parallels the report states, underlining the need to adapt engineering design and flood management strategies to accommodate the recent extension in the range of recorded runoff variability.

Climate Changing Behaviours

The Sustainable Scotland Network has [published a report](#) highlighting how the public sector can use to improve low carbon behaviours and practices within the workplace, and as part of projects and initiatives in partnership with others. The report shows how the Individual, Social, Material (ISM) framework can be used to inform behaviour change interventions, including those beyond the low carbon agenda.