Joint letter to Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete on the Climate ambition of the future EU long-term strategy

Dear Commissioner,

The IPCC special report on 1.5°C has shown the importance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C to avoid increased climate-related risks as well as highlighted the urgency to increase our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. To limit global warming to well below 2°C and pursue effort to limit the increase to 1,5°C, it is essential to set up long-term strategies to give a clear direction for climate action and predictability for governments, the civil society and economic agents.

We then welcome the efforts of the European Commission to present a proposal of a long-term strategy for the EU before the COP 24, in a view of submitting it to the UNFCCC by early 2020 after a discussion among policy makers. This will be an important signal of our ambition at the COP 24. We thank the Commission for the open consultation of Member States, stakeholders and citizens that has been organized. Following the release of the IPCC special report, we want to stress again some important points, in line with the Green Growth Group common statement on the long-term strategy and the climate ambition of the EU, released on the 25th of June 2018.

The EU's long-term strategy should be a demonstration of our commitment to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases (net zero GHG emissions) within the Union as early as possible. According to the EU Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, the Commission proposal shall include a 1.5°C scenario and at least one pathways towards net zero GHG emissions in the EU by 2050 followed by negative emissions thereafter. These ambitious scenarios and pathways are crucial to respond to the challenges raised by the IPCC special report 1.5°C and we then strongly emphasize that they should be presented in the proposal in a credible and detailed way to allow a constructive discussion among policy makers.

Among the different pathways presented in the proposal, we encourage the Commission to set a clear direction towards net zero GHG emissions in the EU by 2050.

The Commission proposal will be critical in the upcoming debate at EU level on the content of the NDC that should be communicated or updated by 2020. Therefore, it is especially important that the proposal should take into consideration the consistency of the current European GHG emissions reduction target of at least 40% in 2030 with the trajectories for the different long-term scenarios considered, taking into account the principles of equity as well as cost effectiveness.

In the interest of informing the debate on ambition, as well as taking into account of costs, the proposal should examine the consequences of not acting and compare them with **positive impacts of an ambitious ecological transition**, notably the economic and employment opportunities, the improvement of the quality of life, the benefits for air quality, human health and biodiversity, etc...

We hope that the Commission will consider these points when finalising its proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Lars Chr. Lilleholt

Minister for Energy, Utilities and Climate of Denmark

Kimmo Tiilikainen

Minister of the Environment, Energy and Housing of Finland

François de Rugy

Minister of Ecological and Solidary Transition of France

Brune Poirson

Secretary of State to the Minister of Ecological and Solidary Transition of France

Minister Sergio Costa

Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea of Italy

Carole Dieschbourg

Minister for the Environment of Luxembourg

Eric Wiebes

Minister of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy of the Netherlands

Mr. João Pedro Matos Fernandes,

Minister of Environment and Energy Transition of Portugal

Mr Jure Leben

Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia

Teresa Ribera

Minister for the Ecological Transition of Spain

Isabella Lövin

Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden