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Concerning: 3) Policy Papers

Hot air or climate justice? The COP21

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2 It was called a breakthrough and beginning of an end of fossil fuel. Months of
3 negotiation which come to a climax at the the 21st Conference of the Parties
4 (COP21) when an agreement was reached on December 12th 2015.

5 This somewhat historic and ambitious agreement deserves to be called so,
6 because the agreement includes a reference to the milestone limiting the tem-
7 perature increase to 1.5 C. The universality of signatories and the rhetoric
8 leaders used at the COP21 were unprecedented and this agreement is the most
9 ambitious up to now, in addition to it being legally binding. However, despite
10 some successes, the COP21 just really treads the waters if we consider the ur-
11 gency and the devastating effects climate change has already on populations,
12 and communicates notwithstanding forecasts about the future impacts.

13 The current commitments would only go as far as reducing the man made tem-
14 perature increase to more than 3 C. More voluntary commitments are needed
15 to achieve a real decrease in temperature and avoid catastrophic consequences
16 for the globe. Any review of the intended nationally determined reductions or
17 INDCs will not happen before 2018. Bearing in mind that current estimates
18 predict that by 2020 the world will have reached the emission levels causing
19 temperatures to rise above the 1.5 C threshold injects some reality to the ambi-
20 tious talks. In practice the 1.5 C commitment was never made and is certainly
21 not legally binding: it remains an ambition mentioned in this final agreement
22 and that alone was cause for celebration.

23 The celebratory mood the COP21 generated was born out of political hiber-
24 nation and avoidance on the issue of climate change. Highlighting the lack of
25 political will which has prevailed for years causing a minimal agreement with
26 a mildly progressive look to cause such celebration. It illustrates the weak-
27 ness and failure of the climate politics. The significance of the agreement and
28 commitments in their current form will not halt climate change nor do they
29 provide mechanisms to pay reparation payments for loss and damage or lay
30 out a financing strategy to leave fossil fuels.

31 Furthermore, no financial model has been established to adequately help coun-
32 tries in the Global South to avoid going through a fossil fuel intensive tran-
33 sition of their economy. Financing for climate protection and adaptation for
34 countries from the Global South is completely missing from the agreement.

35 A commitment to renewable energies is missing from the legally binding text
36 and is only mentioned as a preamble. Together with vague passages that
37 have replaced the clear aim of de-carbonising the economy, the agreement still
38 stipulates a false technological fix for the climate crisis such as carbon storage.
39 There is no clear political commitment to end the era of fossil fuels, nor are
40 there clear targets and plans for the urgently needed energy transition to clean
41 renewable energies.

42 Hopes for Paris were a climate financing plan where availability and distribu-
43 tion and the steady increase of funds available to the Global South would be
44 announced. When demanding drastic climate action from a global commu-
45 nity, it is ignorant to demand drastic climate action from e.g. India where 21.3
46 % or 266 million inhabitants have no access to electricity, without providing
47 adequate financial and technological support.

48 Should a country not comply with their climate commitments, there is no
49 penalty mechanism which applies. Our role as young Europeans is to hold
50 our governments accountable, to seek further political commitment, to push
51 the agenda for legally binding enforcement mechanisms. Climate change can
52 only be tackled on a global level. Political pressure can only be mounted if
53 civil society movements are mobilised and join the climate fight. Our support
54 for direct actions such as the Ende Gelände movement must be an essential
55 strategy for our future fight for climate justice. The COP22 in Morocco repre-
56 sents an important opportunity to further mobilise and cooperate on a global
57 level.

58 Divestment and decarbonising the economy is an easy, essential next step for
59 the Global North to take and must be a priority to call for from governments

60 and businesses. Our full commitment and the combined pressure of civil so-
61 ciety and political actors must change the carbon intensive industries not to
62 only cut our own emissions but to drive low carbon technologies forward and
63 demonstrate that quitting the addictive carbon intensive diet is overdue.

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