

## **Greece's Position on Reducing Carbon Emissions**

### **Reducing Carbon Emissions**

#### **Description of Topic:**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change once stated that “Continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts” (Warrack and Mooney). In 2015, there was a historical moment, countries around the globe gathered in Paris to combat global warming. According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, COP21, or more commonly known as the Paris Climate conference “brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects... [to try to keep] a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius...[with a] a global stocktake every 5 years to assess the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Agreement” (UNFCCC). Now in 2020, we have clearly seen that COP21 was far too ambitious. As a globe, we were unable to keep the overall temperature below two degrees Celsius by 2020. Countries all around have been feeling the harsh effects of failed accord. Of course, some countries, specifically developing countries feel the impacts harder. Although Greece is modernized, it is a country with a struggling economy furthered by global warming. Athens. Crete. The Parthenon. Greece is littered with attractions; in fact, according to the CIA World Factbook, “Tourism provides 18% of GDP” (CIA World Factbook). But with Earth heating up because of global warming, Greece is losing tourism. According to Euro News, “...the weather there is a key to the success of the Greek tourist industry...climate change will definitely ‘change’ the tourist ‘wave’ towards Greece...less winter rain will increase incidents of drought, turning Greek fields to desert....warm sea waters could seriously damage fish populations and thus affect the entire food chain” (Kitsikopoulos). In order to save Greece, the

government of Greece has to expend billions of euros to support Greece; billions of euros that Greece does not have. A study from the National Bank of Greece has reported that “...if climate change continues as expected until 2050 and 2100 without a global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, then this will cause huge damage to the Greek economy, or 701 billion euros by 2100 to be precise” (Kitsikopoulos). The government of Greece has already been crippled and damaged by the Syrian crisis. To add on droughts, deserts and loss of tourism and the loss of 701 billion euros by 2100 to combat climate change, Greece desperately needs the globe to reduce carbon emissions.

### **Past Action:**

With the negative impacts Greece will face if they do not properly defend against climate change, what has Greece done to save their country? According to the International Council on Clean Transportation, for most of Greece’s history, carbon dioxide emissions were one of the highest in the European Union. In 2009 the levels suddenly dropped in 2009. For the next five years, Greece was capable of reducing vehicle CO2 emissions so rapidly that it was able to outpace every single European Union country except the Netherlands. Over the next five years, Greece reduced vehicle CO2 emissions so rapidly that it managed to overtake every other EU country except the Netherlands. First, the “Greek government imposes a vehicle circulation tax that is based on engine capacity and vehicle CO2 emissions...[Next] the share of mini and small vehicles increased, while sales in other segments declined considerably (figure). The greatest impact can be seen on the medium segment, which diminished from 14% in 2009 to a mere 3% in 2014. Additionally, the percentages of upper-medium, luxury, and sport segments were almost completely wiped out by 2014. In general, new-vehicle sales also fell considerably; they were 67% lower in 2014 than in 2009, and 76% lower compared to 2001” (ICCT). Three National

Programs were installed, one in 1995, one in 2002 and fixed in 2007. All three instituted heavy emphasis on completing a GHG emission reduction by “...changing the fuel mix to include a higher percentage of natural gas and renewable energy sources; improving energy efficiency and conservation in all sectors; effecting structural changes in agriculture and transportation; reducing emissions in waste management... and expanding research and development efforts” (European Environment Agency). The country of Greece is a part of the European Union’s trading scheme or ETS for CO<sub>2</sub>, which has been functioning since 2015. Next, according to the UNFCCC National Reports, Greece has committed to the CCPM, or the European common and coordinated policies and measures, that constitute “...a legislative framework that supports and set the targets of a number of the respective national policies for the restriction of GHG emissions. Part of the CCPM is the ‘climate and energy package’, which was agreed by the European Parliament and Council in December 2008 and became law in June 2009. The climate and energy package serves three key objectives for 2020, known as the ‘20-20-20’” (UNFCCC). The country of Greece is a leader in reducing carbon emissions, in the European Union and in the World. There is so much at stake, not just Greece but the entire World. How can the World reduce Carbon Emissions?

**Solutions:**

As global warming and climate change is not just a national crisis, but an international crisis, the world needs to be able to lower and reduce their carbon emissions. Greece would like the propose the carbon market solution. The first, being a carbon market. According to Lexicon, a carbon market is a “...market that is created from the trading of carbon emission allowances to encourage or help countries and companies to limit their carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions” (Lexion). There are several carbon markets around the world and currently, Greece is a part of

the EU ETS, or the European Union's Emission Trading System, which is "...the world's biggest scheme for trading greenhouse gas emissions allowances. Launched in 2005, it covers some 11,000 power stations and industrial plants in 30 countries, whose carbon emissions make up almost 50% of Europe's total" (Guardian). The EU ETS is a cap and trade system, where companies are able to buy or receive "...emission allowances which they can trade with one another as needed. They can also buy limited amounts of international credits from emission-saving projects around the world. The limit on the total number of allowances available ensures that they have a value" (Europa). After every year, the company must be willing to yield enough of its allowances to cover all of its carbon emissions, otherwise fines will be imposed. If the company is able to reduce their carbon emissions, it is able to keep the spare allowance to cover future needs. A strong carbon price is also able to promote investing in cleaner energy. The European Union's carbon market and trading has been proven to work. According to the European Commission Climate Action, emissions from the installations in Europe have been falling, as intended. Emissions have dropped around 5% compared to 2013. By 2030, carbon emissions are expected to drop and be 43% lower. The EU ETS have also been inspiring more emission trading in other countries and regions. What's more, "The EU ETS is also inspiring the development of emissions trading in other countries and regions. The EU aims to link the EU ETS with other compatible systems" (Europa). Proven to be an effective system, there ought to be more global carbon markets in the world. According to the Carbon Market Data, there are currently, only around thirteen global carbon markets implemented around the world; with no carbon markets in neither Africa nor South America, and only three in North America. If the EU ETS can reduce 43% of carbon emissions in 10 years, why should we should the globe not execute more global markets?

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## **Gender and Climate Change**

### **Description of Topic:**

Climate change impacts everybody, which is why it is so unfortunate that women are so underrepresented and their voices are unheard in a situation as threatening as climate change. According to the UNFCCC, women face risks higher than males and have greater burdens from the impacts of climate change. Not only are the majority of people in poverty are women, but women have an unequal participation in decision making processes and labour market compound inequalities often stop women from fully contributing to helping combat climate change (UNFCCC). Greece is the land where humans started laying the bricks for democracy; many governments today are based on the Greek model. Yet, democracy means that everyone has a voice, “Greek women were not able to vote at the National Elections until 1952. The practice of obligatory dowries wasn't outlawed until 1983. Today, there are only 79 women in Greece's 300-member Parliament...Greece routinely ranks at the bottom of female representation in government, trade unions, and political parties among the 25 nations of the European Union” (Padesat). It is very ironic that the nation that laid the foundation for democracy is being outpaced by other European nations. The European Union is known for being very well developed with a high standard of living. Unfortunately, research from Dr. Joanna Tsiganou, Director of Research at EKKE the General Secretariat for Research and Technology states that, “In the case of Greece, as well as in the case of other countries under economic crisis and austerity, gender inequality persists, while new forms of discrimination emerge” (Tsiganou). The unfortunate truth is, Greece is going through too many issues to deal with gender inequality. As we collectively advance as a human race, things like gender inequality is starting to dissipate. In contrast, according to Greek Reporter Philip Chrysopoulos, “Greece ranks 91st in gender

equality, according to the latest figures by the World Economic Forum. It is noted that in 2010, Greece was in 58th place” (Chrysopoulos). Greece’s gender inequality is shocking, as a European Union nation, but gender inequality is getting worse by the year. According to Deutsche Welle, the German international broadcaster, “Greek society exhibits one of the lowest levels of women in positions of power and socio-economic decision-making in the EU,” wrote Maro Pantelidou-Maloutas, a political science professor at the University of Athens” (DW). With so much legislation passed in order for Greece to combat climate change, how can Greece and the international community promote more gender representation to fight climate change?

### **Past Action**

The United Nations has taken many steps to increase gender equality throughout the world. In accordance to climate change and equal gender representation, they have taken less. According to the UNDP, “Women in developing countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change because they are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood. Women charged with securing water, food and fuel for cooking and heating face the greatest challenges. Women experience unequal access to resources and decision-making processes, with limited mobility in rural areas...recognizing and supporting the needs of women is essential for socio-economic development” (UNDP). Women have such a burden when it comes to climate change and supporting their family. Luckily, when countries first agreed on the Paris Climate accords, they agreed that “Parties should when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health...as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity” (UNFCCC). It is vital that the Paris climate accords was signed on the basis that there gender equality was a significant

factor. Later, in November of 2013, the eighteenth session of COP, members gathered in Qatar and decided “...on promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol” (UNFCCC). The United Nations has laid strong foundations in the start of higher levels of gender equality in the world, and their role in climate change; but what other strategies can the United Nations take as a whole to help both women and the world itself?

### **Solutions:**

Greece mainly believes firmly in education and empowerment to help combat climate change and gender inequality. Greece believes in the empowerment of women in developing countries, based on the Drawdown model. First off, according to Vanessa Gates Ramirez, attorney law on Singularity Hub, women with higher education have fewer and healthier children. Women dying during pregnancy and infant mortality rates are lower for educated women. Girls who stay in school longer are less likely young or without consent. Lower HIV/AIDS and malaria rates, higher agricultural plots and higher production rates are all benefits of higher education. To make 62 million girls from around the globe have their right to learn, is to essential for our world, both in gender equality *and climate change*. (Ramirez). The benefits of having fewer, healthier children is that “A recent study has found that having one fewer child in your family is the most effective action you can take to reduce your individual carbon footprint” (one million women). By educating women, we are not only lowering our carbon footprint, having healthier children *and* empowering women all across the world. Greece believes by educating women in developing countries, “The UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization estimates universal education in low- and lower-middle-income countries could be



achieved by closing an annual financing gap of \$39 billion. This could result in an emissions reduction of 59.6 gigatons by 2050” (Ramirez). The idea of educating and empowering women should definitely be implemented and expanded. First, the benefits of empowering women, especially in developing nations will drastically improve the nation. Research done by Global Partnership states that “Education reduces poverty, boosts economic growth and increases income. It increases a person's chances of having a healthy life, reduces maternal deaths, and combats diseases such as HIV and AIDS. Education can promote gender equality, reduce child marriage, and promote peace” (Global Partnership for Education). If education can do all that and more, it is vital in teaching the world about gender inequality, and help climate change; as a society, we must educate. Furthermore, according to Singularity Hub, the complete atmospheric CO2 reduction of 119.2 gigatons that come from educating and empowering women make *for the number one solution to reversing global warming* (Global Partnership for Education).. To help implement education in developing countries, Greece suggests funding organizations, such as the Global Partnership for Education, their accomplishments include “38 million additional girls...enrolled in schools across GPE partner countries between 2002 and 2015... 74% of girls finished primary schools in 2015 in GPE partner countries compared to 57% in 2002” (Global Partnership for Education). With more funding, organizations such as the Global Partnership for Education will be able to empower and educate more girls, leading to a world with less carbon emissions.

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## **Adapting to Climate Change**

### **Description of Topic:**

Climate change is an ever present crisis, not just impacting a portion, but the entire human race as a whole. Not only will climate change's effect on Greece be disastrous, but the whole world, and the next generation as well. According to NASA, "Global climate is projected to continue to change over this century and beyond. The magnitude of climate change beyond the next few decades depends primarily on the amount of heat-trapping gases emitted globally" (NASA). The whole world has acted as a whole to combat this, but more steps are necessary. Greek research from Christos Giannakopoulos states that, "Agriculture and tourism are undoubtedly the most important economic sources for Greece and these may be more strongly affected by changing future climate conditions. Climate change and their various negative impacts on human life are also detected in their environment" (Giannakopoulos). Adapting to climate change is the only way we can ensure longer and healthier lives for the next generation. Greece is for one, has been steadily adapting to global warming to ensure the safety of its people and country. Research by Sikihardi in Greek Reporter says that "Significant steps include moving "[moving] up several places to rank 17th among the 28 European Union member-states for the adoption of climate change policies...WWF Hellas and Greenpeace" (Sikihardi). Greece has slowly been trudging forward in their climate change policies and reduction of carbon emissions, even with the Syrian crisis on their backs. Unfortunately, Greece "...as yet to plan a national strategy for climate change adaptation, even though it is situated in one of the most susceptible parts of the Mediterranean. For Greece, adaptation is a necessity - not a luxury. [Greece's] dependence on the natural environment is too great to be ignored even under the current conditions of economic crisis" (World Wide Fund for Nature). Even so, Greece has taken many significant steps to ensure the prolonged safety of their country. According to the Global

Leadership on Climate change, “Athens is the first city in Greece to develop an integrated Climate Action Plan for both mitigation and adaptation... Athens would like to highlight the ambition this plan sets: to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 and help the city and its citizens adapt to climate change” (C40). Athens has joined many cities before it in developing a Climate Action Plan to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As previously stated, Greece has made three National Climate Change Programs, “All three iterations placed heavy emphasis on achieving GHG emission reductions commitments by: changing the fuel mix to include a higher percentage of natural gas and renewable energy sources; improving energy efficiency and conservation in all sectors; effecting structural changes in agriculture and transportation; reducing emissions in waste management; and (to serve longer-term needs) expanding research and development efforts” (EEA). Entering this, Greece emphasizes the reduction of GHG emissions, which will greatly reduce the amount of carbon emissions set in the Mediterranean. Greece urges the international community act as a whole to keep making steps in order to adapt to climate change.

### **Past Action**

The United Nations once said that ““Adaptation is so important because it can be integrated with the pursuit of development, and can help prepare for the risks to which we are already committed by past emissions and existing infrastructure” (UN). The United Nations has done numerous things in order to try adapt and preserve the planet for future generations to come. First off, in 1992 the Earth Summit “...produced the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a first step in addressing the climate change problem. Today, it has near-universal membership. The 197 countries that have ratified the Convention are Parties to the Convention. The ultimate aim of the Convention is to prevent

‘dangerous’ human interference with the climate system” (United Nations). UNFCCC was phenomenal, almost all countries from around the world united for a common purpose, to try to save the planet. Secondly, the United Nations worked on the “UN Global Migration Group – collaborating on projects to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations in rural areas to the impacts of natural hazards, climate change, food security and displacement” (United Nations). This was to help rural and developing areas’ strength towards natural hazard, *climate change*, and more, this is a very important and has shown the good that the United Nations can do. Next, IPCC, or the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was set up by the WMO, or “...the World Meteorological Organization...United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide an objective source of scientific information” (United Nations). These programs were designed to provide crucial information show important data and trends for climate change. Lastly, the United Nations’ 2030 Sustainable Goals include to “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts” (United Nations). The Sustainable Goals for 2030 are 17 “action[s] for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom...no poverty...zero hunger...” (United Nations). That means that climate change is necessary for the people and this planet to prosper, solving climate change is one of the 17 important agendas in the United Nations.

## **Solutions**

Adapting, as the world changes too is essential to ensure the best possible future for the next generation. Greece suggests that the first adaptation that the world should take is agricultural adaptation. “Agriculture is highly exposed to climate change, as farming activities

directly depend on climatic conditions...agriculture accounted for a total 471 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents in 2012. This represented 10.3 % of total EU-28 GHG emissions in 2012” (European Commission). Agriculture is the staple for all countries, without agriculture the country is doomed to fall. As temperatures rise, crops could yield less and less, because of the direct dependence it has on climate conditions. Adapting our crops accordingly is necessary for our survival. According to the European Commission, Adaptive measures include agriculture to technology to adjusting farm managements and structures and more. These include using water more efficiently by reducing water losses, improving irrigation practices, and storing and recycling water. Next, improving our soil management by increasing water retention to conserve the moisture in the soil is crucial. Lastly, we are introducing more heat-tolerant livestock breeds and changing their diet patterns under heat stress (European Commission). If we are able to help reduce carbon emissions and help prepare countries’ agriculture to face the ever raising temperature, that will ensure that our crops do not fail while the globe heats up. Secondly, communication is key in adapting to climate change. Research by the European Environment Agency or the EEA states that “Closer cooperation, including better policy alignment, will be crucial to reduce the impacts of weather- and climate-related hazards like floods, heatwaves, forest fires, or storm surges. Increasing coherence in actions and using innovative methods can improve the handling of these events...” (EEA). Communication and better alignment will be essential to be able to minimize the impacts stronger natural disasters, caused by global warming. Lastly, Greece would like to suggest that all developing countries should prepare National Adaptation Programs of Actions which “are an essential first step for countries to identify priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change—those for which further delay would increase vulnerability and/or costs. In addition, NAPAs and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers should be integrated into national development

plans” (UN). All in all, Greece believes that Adapting our agriculture, stronger communications with closer cooperation and countries preparing NAPAs are the best way that the international community is able to neutralize the threat global warming faces.

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