



Turkish Parliament Will Ratify the Paris Climate Agreement

The Turkish Government, in its statement at the United Nations General Assembly, declared that it will submit the Paris Climate Agreement [“**Paris Agreement**”] for parliamentary approval next October -before the United Nations Climate Change Conference-, which will take place in November. Thus, Turkey has officially announced that it will take the expected step to put the Paris Agreement into force, which it signed 6 years ago.

Turkey is one of the 6 countries which have not yet put into force the Paris Agreement by completing the ratification procedures, together with Iran, Iraq, Libya, Eritrea, and Yemen.

What is the Paris Agreement About?

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international agreement on climate change, drawn up by 196 countries that came together within the body of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [“**COP21**”] in December 2015. The agreement’s goal is to combat climate crisis, which is fast worsening, and to ensure compliance with the conditions determined in a cumulative manner in order to prevent a catastrophe. Accordingly, it is aimed to limit the global warming to 2°C, and preferably to 1.5°C compared to the pre-industrial levels. The most effective way to achieve this objective is stated as reducing the emissions.

The Paris Agreement is considered to be a landmark as it is the first multilateral binding agreement to gather all nations together around a single goal, namely combating climate change and adapting to its effects.

Providing financial support from developed countries to developing countries in order to improve adaptation to climate change and transition to renewable energy, as well as to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from human activities to a level that nature can absorb naturally and consequently ensuring that does not threaten food production are the prominent objectives of the Paris Agreement.

Parties determine how and when they will commit to reducing their emissions on a voluntary basis. Commitments to reduce emissions fall under four main groups: (i) Absolute Reduction, (ii) Ceiling Emission Year, (iii) Reduction from the Reference Scenario, and (iv) Emissions Intensity Goal.

What Does Paris Agreement Mean for Turkey?

Turkey is among those who made a commitment of “Reduction from the Reference Scenario”. Accordingly, with the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the amount of greenhouse gases that would be released into the atmosphere if the current policies continued to be applied, should be considered as the reference scenario, and emissions should be reduced below this level. Therefore, it is essential for Turkey to make an energy transition in the industrial sector and to determine long-term emission mitigation policies.

With the ratification of the agreement before the Climate Change Conference [“COP26”] which will be the first summit where a general evaluation of the process will take place since the Paris Agreement, Turkey will have the opportunity to negotiate for the funds financing the transition.

Moreover, export to the European Union [“EU”] will not be jeopardized if the harmonization policies required by the Paris Agreement are followed as it is necessary to produce from clean sources in order to take part in the transformation -which is also known as the green market- initiated by the EU.

Ratification of the Paris Agreement Is Not Enough

With the European Green Deal, which was issued in November 2019, the EU took another step toward creating a carbon-free society by tackling the challenges of greenhouse gas emission, global warming, and climate change. It is important for all countries that have economic and geographical interaction with the EU to adapt to new rules of the market since new financial and tax regulations regarding imports are also being introduced in order to protect the newly established green market.

The agreement generally aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050 and to mitigate net greenhouse gas emissions by %55 until 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

Within this context, the European Green Deal Action Plan was published by the Ministry of Commerce of the Republic of Turkey earlier this year. The action plan explains how to achieve the transformation that will support the transition to a sustainable and green economy in line with Turkey’s development plan under three main headlines as scope, goals, and calendar.

The carbon border adjustment mechanism [“CBAM”] which is a critical method for fulfilling the EU Green Deal’s objectives was extensively addressed in the action plan released by the Ministry of Trade and Commerce. The proposal on the CBAM introduced by the European Commission on 14 July 2021 commits EU importers to pay a carbon tax for the carbon emissions of their products. It is aimed to ensure environmentally friendly production and to protect the competitiveness of local manufacturers. In this regard, Turkish Ministry of Commerce pointed out that it will determine the country’s position on carbon pricing as well as actions to minimize greenhouse gas emissions.

Conclusion

With the announcement that the Paris Agreement will be submitted to the parliament for ratification and the Ministry of Commerce’s publication of the EU Green Deal Action Plan, Turkey seems to have started to take more concrete steps towards achieving its objectives with various mechanisms for the solution of the climate crisis. These actions have become inevitable, especially in the face of the global transformation that has gain momentum with Covid-19 pandemic and increasing natural disasters.

Turkey will officially become a part of the global cooperation and hopefully take its place in the new green order with the ratification of the Paris Agreement.

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