



# Low Carbon Society The EU Policy Context

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[ec.europa.eu/climateaction](http://ec.europa.eu/climateaction)

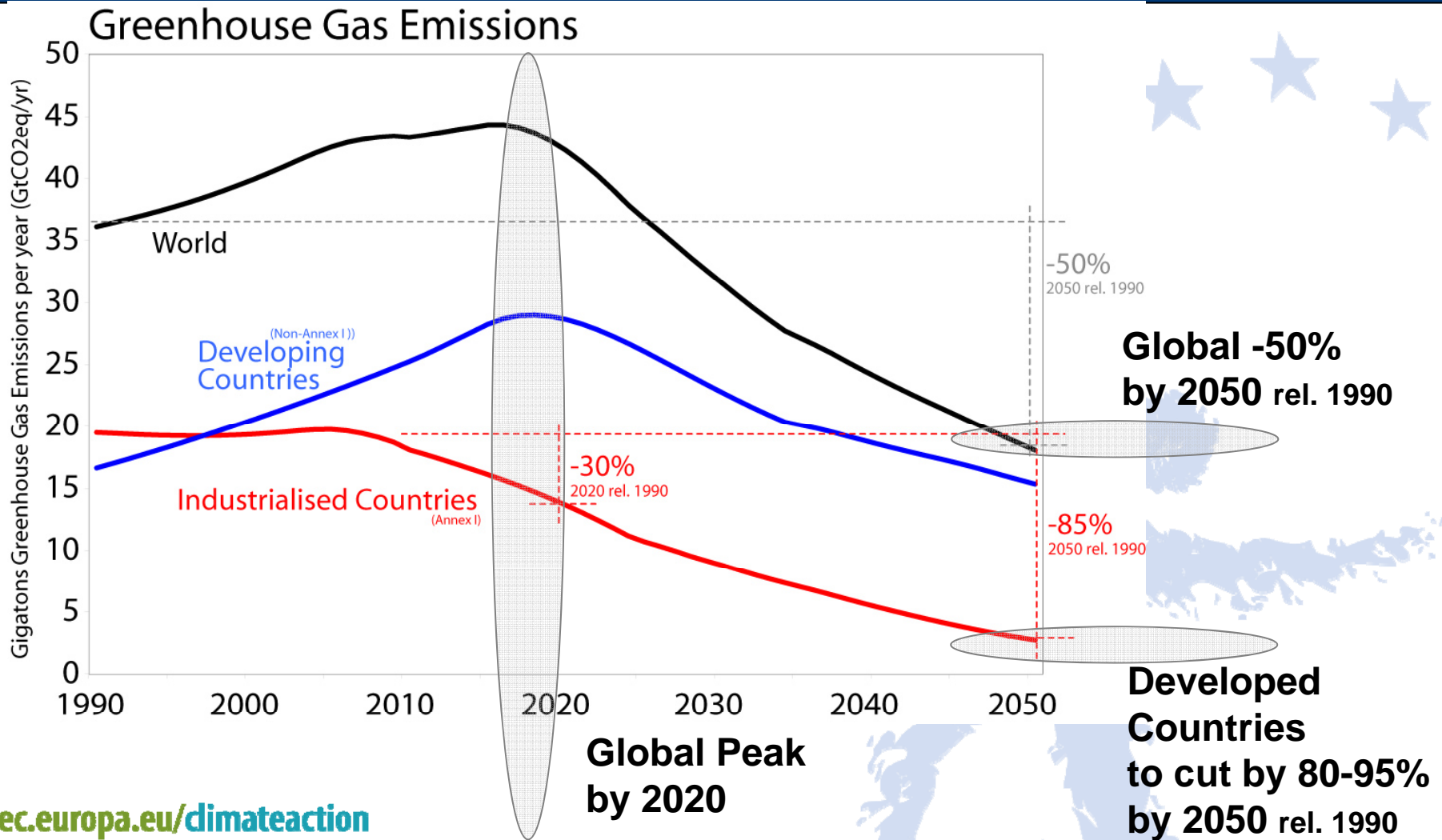


## A commitment from the highest level

The next Commission needs to maintain the momentum towards a low emission economy, and in particular towards **decarbonising our electricity supply and the transport sector** – all transport, including maritime transport and aviation, as well as the development of clean and electric cars. Decarbonising electricity supply and transport will also bring additional benefits in terms of security of energy supply.

*Political Guidelines for the next Commission, President J.M. Barroso, July 2009*

# The EU's vision: staying below 2° C



# The Copenhagen menu

- Targets/Actions:
  - Comparability targets of developed countries
  - Nationally appropriate mitigation action by developing countries
- Finance and technology: Support for developing countries, both mitigation and adaptation
- Carbon Markets: A new crediting mechanism and improving the CDM

# Managing the transition to a low-carbon society

- A cost-effective policy mix with market-based incentives at the core
  - Create robust price signal
  - Induce behavioural changes
  - Create enabling environment for technological advances
- Stakeholder consultation
- A gradual approach with a strategic direction towards a long-term objective

## The climate and energy package of December 2008

- Extending greenhouse gas targets to 2020
- Strengthening the price signal – reforming the EU ETS
  - Ambitious cap to 2020 and beyond
  - More auctioning
- Technology
  - CCS Directive to create an enabling legal framework
  - Renewables Directive
  - 300 million allowances to support demonstration of innovative renewables and CCS

## Low-carbon growth or development?

- A key tension in the climate negotiations is the responsibilities of developed vs developing countries
- UNFCCC defined “*common but differentiated responsibilities*”
- EU initially called for developing countries to elaborate “low carbon *development strategies*” as part of Copenhagen deal
- In the MEF the term was transformed into “low carbon *growth plans*”

## All politics is incremental

- Legally-binding targets for 2020
  - *2020 is a long way from now*
  - NB: EU ETS goes beyond 2020 with default linear factor
- Aspirational objectives for 2050 linked to scientific necessities
  - *2050 is ten election cycles into the future*
- Developing countries refuse the notion of a target – hence NAMAs



## The coming together of Lisbon and Copenhagen

- Is the low-carbon economy and society the second attempt to overcome the dichotomy between environment and economy (after sustainable development)?
- Climate and energy package has shown that economic growth and climate policy go hand-in-hand
- Other world regions increasingly see this link as well – e.g. developing countries aim to innovate their way out of environmental and resource constraints

## A multi-fold challenge for research

### What are the current research gaps and challenges?

- Various scientific disciplines need to contribute to low-carbon society research, across natural and social science
- However LCS-R does not make for a scientific discipline of its own
- LCS-R needs to cover both the next steps as well as the long-term objective

## To conclude – thinking beyond Copenhagen

- The move to a low-carbon economy and society requires a fundamental transformation at global level
- This requires moving beyond the traditional policy conflicts - economy, environment, energy
- In Europe a low carbon economy is seen as a competitive, knowledge-driven economy
- For this reason climate policy has now a firm place on the agenda of prime ministers



**More information on EU climate policy:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/home\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/home_en.htm)**