

Remarks by the leader of the Federal
Assembly of the Russian Federation
delegation Mr. Andrey Klimov, deputy
chairman of the Federation Council
Committee for foreign affairs
at the closing session of the Tenth
Asia-Europe Parliamentary
Partnership Meeting (ASEP 10)

Brussels, September 28, 2018

Distinguished colleagues,

Allow me to begin by thanking ASEP organizers for choosing such important subject as climate change and the caused global challenges which are not limited to any single region. What we are dealing with is related to the survival of humankind as a whole and is one of the key problems of the 21st century. After all, it is not a coincidence that in the 2017 Global Risks Report extreme weather events were ranked as a number one global risk in terms of the likelihood of their occurrence.

The Eurasian continent is today the global industrial powerhouse. With a population of more than five billion people, Eurasia is the most populous continent. Its economy accounts for two thirds of the global GDP. Given all these indicators, it is not surprising that the environmental burden is also at its maximum. As parliamentarians representing the people of Eurasia, we are called upon to make a substantial contribution to fighting climate change.

We are all well aware that the signing of the Paris Climate Agreement was an essential point in this matter. Russia welcomes its entry

into force and is committed to completing the ratification process in 2019. Russia views the agreement as an international instrument that provides a solid foundation for enacting long-term climate regulations.

In this context, it is unfortunate that there are countries that place themselves in opposition to the rest of the humanity and adopt a strange-minded attitude toward named document. In particular, the decision by Washington to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement is highly regrettable. The refusal by a country that accounts for almost 18 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions to be part of a universal agreement could significantly constrain collective international efforts to reduce the human factor impacts on the climate.

I would like to take this opportunity to call on all countries, and especially the largest countries of the world that have the biggest environmental impact, to be more proactive in their efforts to resolve the environmental challenges of the 21st century.

Russia has adopted a responsible attitude toward fulfilling its international commitments. Our country has been consistent in compliance with its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, and did even more than it was expected. Between 1991 and 2012, Russia substantially cut down on its greenhouse gas emissions. This prevented some 40 billion tons of CO₂ equivalent from getting into the atmosphere. In addition, between 2000 and 2015, greenhouse gas emissions increased by just 12 percent, while the country's GDP surged by almost 80 percent.

President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin announced that by 2030 Russia undertakes to limit greenhouse gas emissions down to 70 percent of the baseline level of 1990. This would mean keeping emissions

at the same level for 35 years, which would be an incredible achievement. We expect to deliver on this vision by enacting national programs to cut greenhouse gas emissions, introducing new technology, undertaking initiatives for enhancing energy efficiency and promoting renewable energy.

Russia also has the potential to substantially reduce the energy intensity of its economy by promoting power saving solutions and green energy.

Our priority over the next several years will be to facilitate the adoption by our companies of the best available technology. The year 2017 was declared in Russia the Year of the Environment, during which our Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources signed 50 agreements with major corporations worth practically 2 billion US dollars with the view to carrying out more than 200 initiatives. All of them are aimed at manufacturing upgrades and the introduction of the best available technology.

However, Russia's efforts to deliver on its commitments are put in danger by illegal restrictions imposed on Russia by certain Western countries. This could affect Russia's ability to attract funding for promoting low emission development strategies, prevent our country from accessing cutting-edge technology and make it harder for Russia to assist other countries. Some call it sanctions against Russia, but the truth is that these are sanctions against the environment of the entire Eurasian continent. Climate related matters should not be politicized for the sake of one's economic interests.

Distinguished colleagues,

If we look at what ASEP does, this frank and constructive dialogue on this extremely important subject shows that ASEP offers a good platform for promoting this dialogue across the Eurasian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The results of our plenary sessions and panel discussions are reflected in the final declaration including some paragraphs devoted to the human rights concerns. Certainly, human rights commitment, respect for democracy and rule of law, strengthening of democratic institutions, fight against corruption, some sharp local conflicts and other political issues are of great importance. Nevertheless, discussing the climate changes and environmental challenges we should keep in mind that the most vital task for us is to preserve our common home for the future generations and for survival of the mankind. There'll be nothing to protect, defend or build without people. So, if one undertakes many steps at the same time, unfortunately none will be accomplished in a proper way.

Let's try to be as much concrete as possible to be more effective in each of our issues. In return we'd like to mark fruitfull atmosphere of constructive cooperation which was during our international drafting group yesterday preparing final declaration of ASEP10.

To conclude, I would like to thank the organizers for inviting us and offering such an enabling working environment.

Thank you for your attention.