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MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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Courtesy translation

Ministers of EU Member States responsible for environment and climate

At present we are facing the decision concerning the entry into force of the Paris Agreement, which shall define climate policy for the next couple of decades. The Agreement is a historic success for the UN, due to the fact that as many as 189 states, including such economic powers as the USA and China have concluded it. The fundamental global problems that should be solved include decreasing the rate of growth of concentration of greenhouse gases, so that by the end of the century the average temperature in the world will not rise by more than 2 degrees Celsius, as compared to preindustrial levels. This would ensure the inhibition of climate change and the improvement of air and soil quality, at the same time leading to the eradication of famine, droughts, lack of biodiversity and desertification.

Therefore the provisions of the Agreement significantly alter the approach towards the issue of climate protection within the EU climate policy. The Paris Agreement gives major flexibility to its Parties concerning the way actions are taken aimed at achieving the so-called climate neutrality. The tools of the Paris Agreement concern not only the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, but also introduce a broader approach, especially when it refers to the reduction of the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This fundamental change in the philosophy of combating climate change is to be implemented by means of increasing CO₂ removal by key elements of the natural environment, especially the forests.

Poland is a country rich in energy sources and its energy security, based on its own resources, that is hard coal and lignite is the foundation of Poland's economy and sustainable development. Moreover, Poland faces the need to develop new energy plants, as it has to satisfy the growing demand for electrical power and replace ageing and inefficient power plants. Poland shall

consent to ratify the Paris Agreement by the EU, provided that our reduction achievements made so far under the Kyoto Protocol and the specificity of our national energy mix are considered.

Poland shall participate in the performance of the Paris Agreement on the path worked out in accordance with the principles of the Agreement and in compliance with its individual approach, which shall be implemented with the exploitation of the potential of forests (removal of 32 million tonnes of CO₂ annually), developing wooden building construction as CO₂ storage (2.5 million tonnes of avoided CO₂ emission annually), using forest and agricultural biomass for the production of energy from RES (5 million tonnes of avoided CO₂ emission annually), taking into account hydro energy potential (an estimated avoided emission of 13.5 million tonnes of CO₂ annually) and including the Polish geothermal resources. The abovementioned approach proved successful in the case of implementing the goals under the Kyoto Protocol – Poland was required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6%, while in fact it managed to achieve a reduction of nearly 30%.

We are not ignoring the problems of climate protection, because we are reducing, and shall continue to reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. However, we shall do this basing on modern technologies, the use of ecological engineering, RES in the form of water energy, geothermal energy and the development of storage facilities for coal accumulated in wood.

I have recently attended a few meetings and had several telephone conversations at international level to present our point of view before the upcoming Environmental Council (ENVI). I announced that Poland is ready to jointly implement the emission reduction goal of 40% by the year 2030 agreed for the EU, but only on terms that take into account the specificity of the Polish economy. I clearly voiced the opinion that Poland's interests need to be secured in the context of the ratification of the Paris Agreement by the European Union.

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