



Council of the  
European Union

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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) - a call for  
urgent action  
- Information from the Commission

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Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Commission on the above subject, to be dealt with under 'Any other business' at the Council (Environment) meeting on 17 December 2020.

**Ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) - a call for urgent action****- Information from the Commission -**

Based on the EU Treaties, the Union has assumed a leading role in international environmental fora, where we pursue an ambitious agenda and advocate for a strong multilateral governance regime based, inter alia, on an array of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), which often provide crucial support in spreading our rules and standards globally. We are continuously urging third countries to ratify and fully implement these MEAs. However, our efforts in this respect are seriously weakened if these Agreements are not ratified by all EU Member States. This undermines not only our credibility but also our negotiating leverage vis-à-vis other countries both during Conferences of the Parties and in the wider governance context set out above. Ultimately, this is detrimental to the achievement of EU environmental policy objectives, notably those included in the European Green Deal, which foresees a global leadership role for the Union based on leading by example and exploiting first-mover advantages. In short, we must walk the talk.

The Commission takes this issue seriously and has recently sent letters to Member States concerned, recalling the importance of completing outstanding ratifications as a matter of urgency. While there are gaps in ratifications across the whole range of multilateral environment instruments, we would draw your attention in particular to instruments related to pollution and biodiversity, two areas that are coming into sharp focus.

We count on Member States' support and prompt action in this regard, which dovetails with the Council Conclusions of June 2019 on EU action to strengthen rules based multilateralism<sup>1</sup> and with the renewed stimulus under the European Green Deal, which necessitates action beyond our borders.

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<sup>1</sup> Conclusions adopted at the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on 19 June 2019 (10341/19)