

COP 19 Climate Capture: Stop the corporate takeover and expansion of carbon markets now!

by Scrap the EU-ETS
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For almost 20 years, multilateral climate policies have served to create profitable financial schemes that maintain fossil fuel dependent systems that are responsible for the climate crisis. November 11-22 in Warsaw, Poland, the 19th Conference of the Parties (COP19) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will be no exception. The EU's agenda for the COP19 will be both to scale-up carbon trading mechanisms and find other ways of sustaining an industrial and financial system dependent on coal, oil and gas, which is facing a crisis of multiple dimensions.

EU's agenda for COP19: more carbon markets

In an attempt to increase the reach of carbon markets, the EU will pledge its continued support to a set of failed policies that have been rejected by more than 140 organizations and social movements from around the world. The EU, Norway, Australia, the USA, and a host of corporate allies aim to establish more environmental markets under the UNFCCC to supplement the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), which lies in shambles.[1] The New Market Mechanism (NMM) would expand the scope of offset schemes like the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). In addition, discussions on the Framework for Various Approaches (FVA) would involve an agreement to approve international trading from various existing national, regional and local carbon markets for compliance with the commitments under the Convention.

The 2012 UN decisions agreed on guiding elements for the NMM, which raise a number of concerns such as the expansion of carbon markets to include forest and other land-based emissions, such as the problematic REDD+ mechanism (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation)[2]. The structure of a possible NMM remains undecided. However, the EU is promoting a NMM that covers broad sectors of Southern countries' economies[3]. This would multiply the severe impacts that the CDM has already had on affected communities, the environment and the climate.

Further, the FVA would allow carbon pollution rights from various national, regional and local Emission Trading Schemes to be traded under the Convention. Pollution permits created by schemes with very different rules would become tradable on a wider scale in a move toward a "global carbon market". As a result, the EU pursues an agenda for increasing markets that have not only failed to provide a solution to the climate crisis, but further benefit industries responsible for continuing climate change.

Climate culprits capture the Convention

COP19 not only risks adding to the EU ETS disaster, it also scales up corporate capture of the climate negotiations by providing a chair inside the central negotiating block. As the Minister of the Environment of Poland, Marcin Korolec, in charge of organising the UN talks announced, "[f]or the first time in 19 years, since the climate talks are being held, representatives of global business will be a part of it." [4] This capitulation to corporate-power furthers a dangerous trend of openly placing corporations at the centre of the decision-making process and guarantees further corporate-led policies that will benefit polluters instead of forcing them to take effective action.

To make things worse, the companies singled out are those with some of the most damaging track records.[5] Some examples are ArcelorMittal, the steel giant which has massively profited from carbon markets while causing damage to vulnerable communities;[6] Alstom, which plans to build the biggest coal power plant in Poland; PGE, Poland's biggest energy company, with investments in coal, shale gas and nuclear and; the oil company LOTOS S.A, which is involved in shale gas and led an astroturf group promoting fracking;[7] and car giants such as BMW, which have been actively lobbying against CO2 emission reductions for cars.[8]

Coal interests strong at COP19

The coal industry, one of the dirtiest energy sources contributing to the climate crisis, will have a strong presence at COP19. The Polish Ministry of Economy and the World Coal Association (with members such as Rio Tinto, Katowice and BHP Billiton) have launched a Communiqué calling on the UN and development banks to set a pathway towards increased use of coal and coal technology.[9] Apart from calling on developmental banks to support Southern countries in accessing new coal technologies, they are organising a "Coal and Climate Summit" during the talks.[10]

COP19 is shaping up as a culminating moment in the corporate capture of the UN talks. With governments partnering up with some of the biggest culprits responsible for the climate crisis, COP19 will increase polluters' ability to profit at the expense of the climate. Carbon markets have demonstrated an absolute inability to start reducing greenhouse gases at source, or promote a just transition away from fossil fuels, both necessary to reduce the impacts of climate change.

We, the undersigned organizations, denounce governments, the UN and their financial allies for yielding to corporate power and their lobby groups instead of standing up to them and enabling a just transition to a post-fossil fuel society. It is time to scrap the ETS and other attempts to commodify nature, time to leave fossil fuels and minerals in the ground, and time to start a real transition towards just and people-driven alternatives.

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Read more: <http://scrap-the-euets.makenoise.org>

[1] EU ETS myth busting: Why it can't be reformed and shouldn't be replicated, www.fern.org/EUETSmythbusting; EU Emissions Trading System: failing at the third attempt <http://corporateeurope.org/news/eu-ets-failing-third-attempt>; Carbon Trading - how it works and why it fails, www.carbontradewatch.org/publications/carbon-trading-how-it-works-and-why-it-fails.html; Trading carbon - how it works and why it is controversial, www.fern.org/tradingcarbon; Energy Security For Whom? For What? www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/resource/energy-security-whom-what; Green is the Color of Money: The EU ETS Failure as a Model for the "green economy" www.carbontradewatch.org/publications/green-is-the-color-of-money-the-eu-ets-faliure-as-a-model-for-the-green-economy.html

[2] For further information on REDD+ see: <http://noredd.makenoise.org/>

[3] A key decision under discussion includes whether to create a NMM based on project-based approaches, like the CDM, or sector-based. Bolivia on the other hand, has called for a moratorium on the establishment of any new markets under the Convention, saying that carbon markets support the constitution of a new global right – the right to pollute – and contradict environmental integrity and the basic science of climate change. See: www.fern.org/sites/fern.org/files/fern-comment/nmmpaper_internet-1.pdf

[4] Dirty Business in Warsaw: <http://corporateeurope.org/it/node/1530>

[5] The corporate partners of COP19 are: ArcelorMittal Poland SA, ALSTOM Power Pty Ltd, BMW Group Poland, Emirates, EUROPRESEE Poland Ltd., General Motors Poland Ltd., Grupa LOTOS SA, International Paper-Kwidzyn . z oo, Kaspersky Lab Poland, LeasePlan Fleet Management (Poland), PGE Polish Energy Group, LOT Polish Airlines (as of mid October LOT Polish Airlines has been removed from the list of partners in some of the posts of the Polish government's official COP19 website)

[6] [www.carbonmarketdata.com/cmd/publications/EU%20ETS %202012%20Company%20Rankings%20-%20June%202013.pdf](http://www.carbonmarketdata.com/cmd/publications/EU%20ETS%202012%20Company%20Rankings%20-%20June%202013.pdf)

[7] <http://www.greens-efa.eu/astrourfing-in-the-ep-8588.html>

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