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Old ghosts are haunting Europe: Reflections on the climate negotiations in a changing security context.

The Ukraine crisis and the IPCC reports have been in the media in recent weeks. This points to a central dilemma: on the one hand, traditional geopolitics in a setting of threats to democracy and concern for military conflicts; and on the other the increasing evidence of global warming and other human impact on the planet's fragile environment, with new risks for disasters and deteriorating conditions for millions of people in the perspective of the next twenty to fifty years. Furthermore, these twin concerns are linked together through energy needs and energy politics, driving forces behind our global industrial civilization.

Global warming has now been on the international agenda for more than twenty years. Important agreements have been concluded, but the increase in emissions of greenhouse gases has continued, as demonstrated by the IPCC reports. The climate negotiations are at a crucial moment, with preparations for the climate regime beyond 2020 in focus, as the decisive Paris Conference of Parties in 2015 approaches.

The European Union has been a driving force in the climate negotiations, and EU measures to reduce its own emissions have been successful. But economic crisis conditions and high unemployment have created social problems which threaten fundamental elements in European politics. Old ghosts from the 1930ies are now haunting Europe with the emergence of extreme racist parties. As elections to the European Parliament will be held on May 25, Europeans have to realize that the cohesion of the European Union may be what stands between us and serious risks of a replay of the 1930ies trauma.

At this point in time, IPCC reminds us that beyond all the concerns of traditional national and European security policy a new global dimension requires our generation to take action on climate change. Global warming is happening and we cannot negotiate with nature.

Over the coming months, difficult negotiations in Bonn, Lima and elsewhere will have to prepare the ground for a major 2015 deal on the long-term response to global warming. An important High-Level meeting in New York in September has been called by the UN Secretary General. Ultimately Governments will have to realize that climate change is not just an environmental issue but a problem of fundamental societal change.

The next step will be the climate meetings in Bonn in early June. As negotiators come together again, they will have to make progress on a number of difficult political and technical questions. Among all these four clusters seem particularly relevant at the present time:

- What should be the legal framework for the post-2020 regime?
- How should the questions related to equity, including loss and damage, be managed?
- How could necessary financing for the transition of energy and transport systems be secured, particularly in developing countries?
- Will it be possible to structure carbon markets in a way that will support necessary societal change?

This is a period of major international and national challenges. But the IPCC reports remind all of us that the global risks associated with climate change need to be given full attention by the international community. And no nation can simply opt out.