

**Committee:** The Environmental Commission

**Issue:** The Implementation of the Paris Agreement

**Student Officer:** Georgia Gotsopoulou

**Position:** Deputy President

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## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Georgia Gotsopoulou and in this year's ACG MUN I will be serving, for the first time, as Deputy President in the Environmental Commission. Throughout the past one and a half year I have had the opportunity to attend lots of conferences, not only as a delegate but as a member of the International Court of Justice as well. MUN is something that could be characterized as one of my passions and debating is something that I have always wanted to do from an early age. The two committees that have sparked my attention are the Environmental Commission and the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee. In my opinion, those two committees seem to tackle most of the problems our world is facing right now and the most important ones, regarding our survival.

As you can imagine, I am more than honored to have the chance to serve as the Deputy President of the Environmental Commission and have as a duty to form a study guide upon the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the topic in which I am the expert chair. I do hope that this study guide will actually help you understand the topic and the whole situation better, so when you are given the opportunity this March to debate upon it, you will surely be able to do so. However, if you happen to have any questions feel free to contact me on: [gotsopoulougeorgina@gmail.com](mailto:gotsopoulougeorgina@gmail.com).

Lastly, I must say that I am honored to have been given such an opportunity and serve as Deputy President in a Commission that tries to tackle such important issues and I am sure that with the help of each and every delegate we will have a fruitful debate taking place in the school's premises.

Best Regards,  
Georgia Gotsopoulou

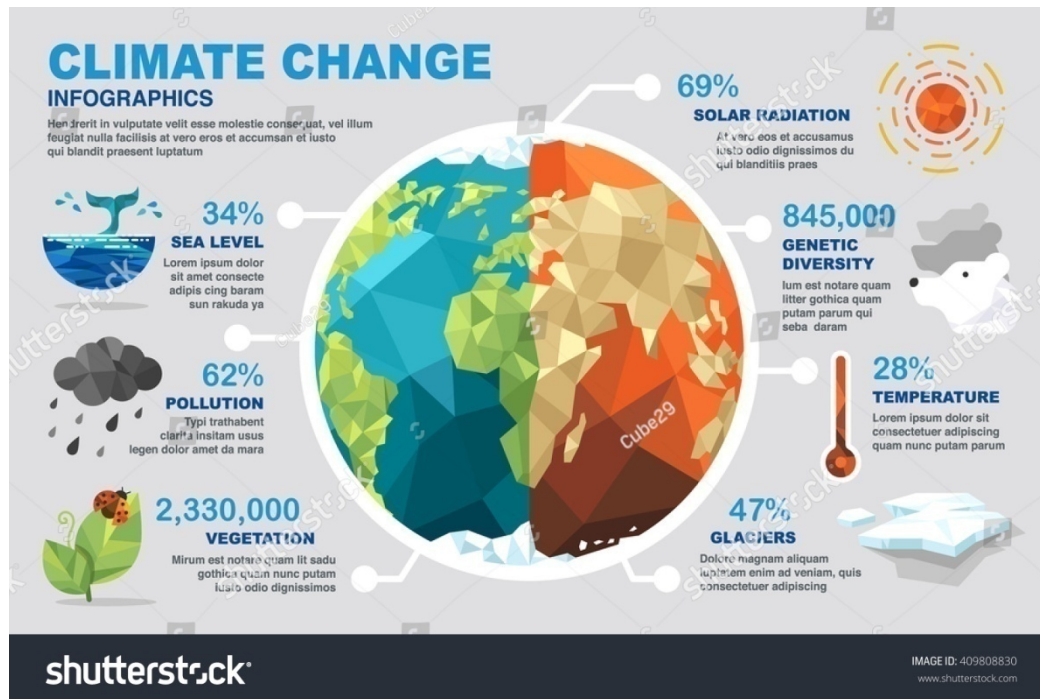
## TOPIC INTRODUCTION

We live in a world which, as we all know, faces thousands of difficulties throughout the years regarding its environment. Natural catastrophes, global warming and overpopulation are just some of the difficulties that have become more prominent throughout the years. The results are horrible: Property destruction or even the unfortunate death of people are just some examples that can be caused by natural catastrophes. Furthermore, the fact that the ice in the Arctic and Antarctica is melting is a serious consequence of global warming. As you have understood, it's our duty to find solutions to tackle such an important issue which does not only affect the environment as a whole, but also innocent human lives that are no correlated to such distortions.

This topic was discussed many times and lots of solutions came up, with most of them not being implemented as they should. And this is where the Paris Agreement comes in. One solution that came up was the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement was "created" in December 2015. It contains goals and binding solutions so that climate change can be minimized or even averted. Its purpose is to generally enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce the vulnerability to climate change with the most prominent solution being the reduction of the use of carbon dioxide. Lots of countries, 195 to be specific, have signed the Agreement and 172 have ratified it (approved by local parliament).

However, there are countries that have not signed it, want to leave or have left the Agreement due to the fact that ratification is in each nation's discretion. Most nations are reluctant to sign the agreement (or leave) due to the fact that environmental regulation is very costly and may hinder a country's economy. You can easily understand that there are two sides of the coin. The benefits and the disadvantages. The benefits are actually the fact that with measures such as limiting the use of carbon dioxide our environment can survive from global warming. Despite that fact, there are countries that claim that by implementing the Agreement job losses will occur, their economy will worsen and they particularly emphasize that the difference will be so little, that the loss will be ten times bigger than the win. Let's not forget that billions of dollars will be spent upon this issue.

So what must we do? In order to have countries sign the Agreement one must at the same time try to cover both aspects, meaning try to solve global warming by implementing the measures proposed in the Paris Agreement, but in a way that will not be detrimental to a nation's economy.



#1 Climate Change Facts

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### Environmental Disasters

“An environmental disaster or ecological disaster is a catastrophic event regarding the environment due to human activity. Environmental disasters can have an effect on agriculture, biodiversity, the economy and human health. The causes include pollution, depletion of natural resources, custom industrial activity or agriculture.”

### The Paris Agreement

“The Paris Agreement, Paris Climate Accord or Paris Climate Agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, dealing with greenhouse gas emissions, mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020. In the Paris Agreement, each country determines plans and regularly reports its own contribution it should make in order to mitigate global warming there is no mechanism to force a country to set a specific target by a specific date, but each target should go beyond previously set targets.”

### Natural Catastrophes

“A natural catastrophe is an unexpected event, caused by nature, such as an earthquake or flood, in which there is a lot of suffering, damage, or death.”

## **Global Warming**

“An increase in the earth's average atmospheric temperature that causes corresponding changes in climate and that may result from the greenhouse effect”

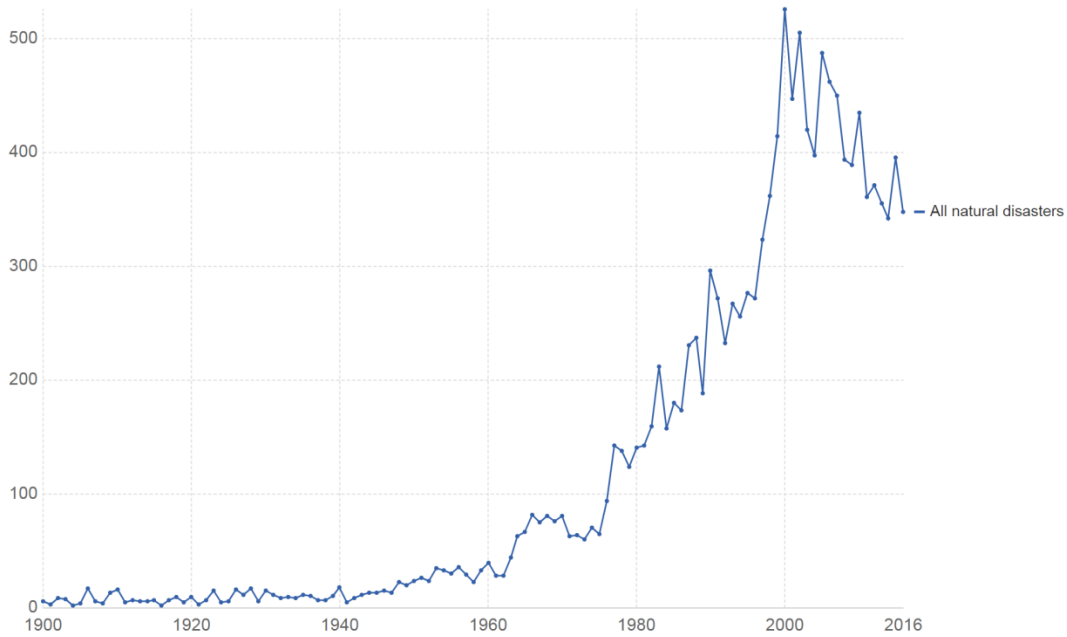
## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Natural Catastrophes**

Natural Catastrophes are a big chapter regarding the situation of the world today and are strongly correlated to the Paris Agreement. Natural disasters, despite their name, are mostly caused by human activities, such as air pollution, and can lead to property damage or even loss of life. This also affects the economy of a country, which is left weaker and not able to support its citizens. Thus, the Paris Agreement once more, tries to tackle such an aspect as well. Let's not forget that natural catastrophes have seen to be increasing throughout the last years and that since the Paris Agreement tries to tackle problems such as air pollution by, for instance lowering the average temperature, it is in immediate need in our world today.

### Number of natural disaster events, All natural disasters

The number of global reported natural disaster events in any given year. This includes those from drought, floods, biological epidemics, extreme weather, extreme temperature, landslides, dry mass movements, extraterrestrial impacts, wildfires, volcanic activity and earthquakes.



Source: Natural disasters - EMDAT (2017)

OurWorldInData.org/natural-catastrophes/ • CC BY-SA

### #2 Natural Disasters Graph

## Climate Change

Climate change could be characterized as one of the main problems the Paris Agreement is trying to tackle since it deeply affects the entire world. It affects the extinction of forests in general, it causes droughts and floods that can lead to displacement and conflict, and it even plays a role in wild life where it affects the life of animals such as tigers, rhinos, African elephants etc. Thus, it's our duty to decrease that problem as well which has again been worsening throughout the past years.

## The Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement as you have so far understood is an Agreement that tries to tackle all the disasters caused by human activities. It was signed as mentioned previously, in 2016 when global warming was worsening by 171 out of 197 countries. However, every agreement has its positive and negative side. Some of the positive effects are the reduction of the temperature, the prevention of the loss of countries such as south Florida, New Orleans, London, the Netherlands, Shanghai and island nations such as Tuvalu and Vanuatu or even the fact that a more developed

framework will be created. On the other hand, some of the negative aspects are money contributions, the need of some countries for stronger action, and the belief that pledges are just promises that can be easily broken. However, is the glass half empty or half full? Well, that's not the right question to ask. What we should be asking ourselves is what we can do about it. Countries must get involved and build upon the Agreement, try to tackle the issue and not let pledges be promises that were never implemented. We live in 2018 and we have to take the responsibility to protect our environment and us at the same time, in our hands.

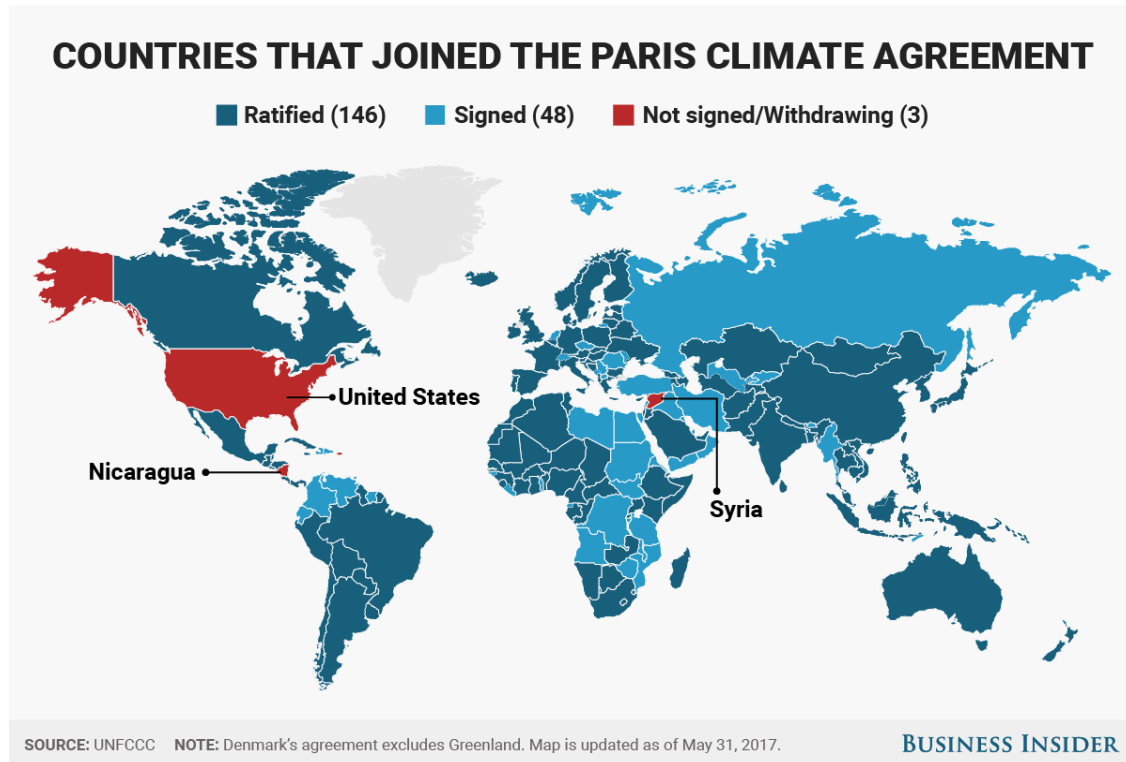
### **The United States of America And their Withdrawal**

The USA, as we all know, is a developed P5 country, with a strong economy and consciousness and at the same time one of the major polluters in our world. Let's keep in mind that statistics have actually shown that the USA is the country with the most carbon emissions. Thus, we need its help when it comes to the Paris Agreement and its implementation. A few years ago, when the President of the United States of America was Barack Obama, USA had actually signed the Agreement. However, when President Donald Trump took over, USA, withdrew from the Agreement on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2016. When asked, the President mentioned that is costly and ineffective, that it wasted taxpayer money and that by withdrawing from such an agreement USA showed leadership and competitiveness. However, that deeply affects all the other countries and the Agreement as well. Not only it directly affects human lives, or doesn't speak for Americans, but also it's an act against the world which cannot end pleasant. As we can understand in this case, that was a move regarding the safeness of Trump's policy and not a move regarding the entire US. What we need to do in such a case is to convince USA to enter the Agreement, or even other countries that have

not signed it, by even changing some aspects of it, so that it contributes to the problem and it's finally tackled for good.

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

### United States of America



#3 Illustration of the Legal Status of the Paris Agreement Worldwide

As mentioned before the USA plays a big role in the world in general, due to the fact that it is, as a country, developed and its economy can actually help into the solution of various problems that concern our world today. However, the USA has decided to withdraw from such an agreement because despite the fact that it proposes measures for our problem to be combated, it is claimed to influence other factors as well, such as the economy of a country, in our case the USA. So, what should be done? Well, let's begin by saying that for most of the members, the USA has to be a part of such an agreement and for some others it hasn't. That of course will heat up the debate and the final result will be something discussed by all delegates. Something that has raised the hopes of many Member States is that USA has left the door open to re-engage in discussions. And let's not forget that that's what we are searching for, re-engagement. To sum up, the situation with the USA is something that needs to be dealt with and all delegates should actually debate upon it.

### Syrian Arab Republic

Syria is also a country that can influence the impact of the Agreement and despite the fact that the country is now in war, we can all understand that it's a strong country by itself. At first, Syria refused to sign the Agreement for familiar reasons that the USA also refuses to do so, one of them being, for instance, the economic "loss". However after reconsideration, the country decided to finally sign the Agreement, due to the fact that it understood that going against every single country, with the USA being the only exception, isn't always a good idea. Thus, we can all understand that such a country can help into solving the issue we are dealing with.

### Russian Federation

Throughout the past years, anyone can easily understand the "hostility" that exists between the USA and the Russian Federation. In our case, we have another example of their relationship. Russia totally supports the Agreement and has mentioned that fighting climate change is a global consensus. As you have understood, there will be a heated and fruitful debate between the delegations of Russian Federation and USA.

### China

Except for Russia, another country that has not such good relationships with USA is China. China has also signed the Paris Agreement and wrestles to take the leadership on climate change from the United States by not only signing such the Agreement but proposing further measures as well, such as investing an amount of money on domestic renewable power generation. As the country's leader, Xi Jinping, has mentioned, China will stand by its responsibilities on climate change. However, what has raised questions is that despite the fact that China is one of the main polluters, the country has decided to adopt the measures of the Paris Agreement, something that we can all agree to be characterized as controversial.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
12 December 2015	The Paris Agreement was negotiated by 196 parties at the 21 <sup>st</sup> conference of the Parties of the



	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris
22 April 2016	High-Level Signature Ceremony for the Paris Agreement
5 October 2016	The threshold for entry into force was achieved.
4 November 2016	The Paris Agreement gets into force
28 March 2017	President Donald Trump signed a sweeping executive order that intended to begin the process of undoing some of the most significant Obama-era environmental regulations.
1 June 2017	USA withdraws from the Paris agreement
7 November 2017	Syria signs the Paris Agreement

### PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

As it was mentioned before, the Paris Agreement is a new solution to the problem we are trying to tackle which contains climate change, natural catastrophes etc. Thus, no previous attempts to actually try to convince USA to enter the agreement or no attempts to modify some of the “rules” of it have been conducted. As all delegates will probably have understood so far, it’s your duty to find solutions and make resolutions so that our goal, which is not only to convince such a country to enter the agreement, but also to modify it and make its implementation better, is completed.

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

All delegates shall find solutions so this problem is combated by multiple aspects.

One solution that could be proposed is for the modification of some measures that are proposed in the Paris Agreement so that all countries can benefit. That of course will be up to the delegates to discuss and decide which aspects will be modified and of course it will be debated so that all countries agree to such a move. Let’s not forget that such an action could urge the USA to sign the Agreement, since it mentioned that it would reconsider it if modifications were made. Those can either be to loosen up the regulations proposed or to find sources of funding to assist member states with adopting environmental regulations

Furthermore, another possible solution is for awareness to be raised. If both adults and children are fully aware of the situation our world has been facing regarding climate change, natural catastrophes etc. then not only they will get sensitized and be

more willing to help due to the fact that it's not only the planet that is in danger but ourselves as well, but also they will influence the country as a whole to make better decisions.

Lastly, annual "conferences" could be held that will be attended by all Member States so that agreements regarding the Environment and the Paris Agreement are made. This way, all countries will be satisfied and no country will claim that such an agreement influences, for instance, the specific country's economy.

All in all, if some of the solutions that are mentioned above are combined with multiple others that all the delegations will hopefully propose, then the problem will surely be combated and our world will surely improve.

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