

Prof. Jean-Pascal van Ypersele

Belgium's Candidate for IPCC Chair Elections 2023



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KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
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Belgium stands for more climate ambition worldwide

Belgium is with and within the European Union invested in climate action; both at national and international levels.

The country's commitment to climate justice increased in recent years, with contributions to climate finance through the Green Climate Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Central African Forest Initiative. The funding focuses on a range of urgent climate issues including; adaptation, early warning systems, sustainable urban development, climate-smart agriculture, biodiversity, and forest management.



Thomas Dermine, Secretary of State for Recovery and Strategic Investments, in charge of Science Policy and Zakia Khattabi, Minister for Climate, Environment, Sustainable Development and Green Deal

As a shareholder in multilateral development banks, Belgium uses its influence to push for sustainable development aligned with the Paris Agreement and support for renewable energy. Belgium's leadership in climate action, science and diplomacy culminates in the Government's support for the candidacy of Professor Jean-Pascal van Ypersele for the IPCC chairmanship.

"I will make every effort to support the candidature of Jean-Pascal van Ypersele. Over the course of his career, he has demonstrated scientific rigour, outreach capacity, negotiating skills, persuasiveness and a genuine commitment to the welfare of future generations. I am sure he would make an excellent Chair of the IPCC"

**Thomas Dermine, Secretary of State
for Recovery and Strategic Investments, in charge of Science Policy**

Professor Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, from the University of Louvain (UCLouvain), is internationally recognised as a climate scientist with great interest in sustainable development and the socio-economic aspects of climate change. He has 40 years of experience in climate science and diplomacy and is an award-winning science communicator.

Professor van Ypersele has been non stop active in the IPCC community since 1995. During the fourth evaluation of the IPCC (AR4), Prof. van Ypersele played a leading role as Vice-Chair of Working Group II (Impacts and Adaptation). He also excellently fulfilled his task as Vice-Chair during the fifth evaluation period (AR5). He initiated many new initiatives and paid special attention to the functioning of the IPCC, including resolving horizontal issues, improving the communication strategy, encouraging participation of experts from developing countries, and more. Additionally, Jean-Pascal van Ypersele was active in key international climate fora and summits from the Rio de Janeiro summit in 92 to the latest COP, via a wide range of working groups, task forces and scientific conferences.

We believe that Prof. van Ypersele's scientific expertise, historical knowledge of the IPCC, and commitment to addressing climate change make him an excellent candidate for the position of Chair. We are convinced Jean-Pascal van Ypersele will bring a fresh perspective and strong advocacy to the role of IPCC Chair with a focus on UN's Sustainable Development Goals, climate justice and a fair transition.



Thomas DERMINE

**Secretary of State for Recovery and Strategic Investments,
in charge of Science Policy**

Professor Jean-Pascal van Ypersele

Ever since I was a student, I had a strong interest in both natural sciences and societal issues, with a passion for knowledge sharing and sustainable development. I received my Ph.D. from the Belgian university UCLouvain (1986, with highest honours), based on work done at the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research. After my military service in the Belgian Navy, I continued researching climate change and authored papers on the modelling of sea ice, paleoclimates, the climate of the 20th and 21st centuries, regional climate change in Europe, Greenland and Africa, the ethical issues associated with responsibility for climate change, sustainable development, adaptation to climate change, mitigation of climate change, and energy provision. I also worked with economists on aspects of climate stabilisation and climate negotiations, and published a report on the mainstreaming of climate change adaptation and mitigation policies in the Belgian development cooperation.

I taught climatology, climate modelling, mathematical geography and environmental and sustainable development at UCLouvain, where I co-directed the interdisciplinary Master programme in Science and Management in Environment and Sustainable development. I now co-direct the 'Plateforme wallonne pour le GIEC' and the Belgian government has appointed me to the High Committee for a Just Transition.

Fascinated by all cultures, I have travelled extensively and I am deeply conscious of development issues. I love nature and mountains, astronomy, photography, and improving the very same world that my experience and strength can serve. I am strongly supported by my wife and our three sons in my ambition to serve the IPCC community by becoming its Chair.

"I want the IPCC to be the dynamic and inclusive "Voice of Climate", providing all policymakers with the most solid and useful scientific information. I aspire to lead the IPCC in a collaborative and efficient way, serving its members full-time and contributing to the capacity development of the next generation of IPCC authors."

"J-P is an excellent candidate for Chair #IPCC- lots of experience, open to new directions"

Michael Oppenheimer, Princeton University Professor
of Geosciences

My vision for the future of climate and the IPCC

The IPCC as the most scientifically solid “Voice of Climate”

“Heartiest congratulations @JPvanYpersele for your official nomination as candidate for @IPCC_CH Chair. Your dedication as climate scientist to help bring attention to climate-affected global south is a practical voice-game changer in fight for justice & continuation of Earth!”

Runa Khan, Bangladesh, Friendship NGO

Improved dialogue for enhanced policy relevance

For almost 30 years, I have been working at the science-policy interface in the IPCC, and I am convinced of the responsibility of the scientific community to build enduring awareness of global climate change. I believe awareness is not only about understanding the problems, but also about finding the solutions. The IPCC must continue to provide solid, factual and rigorous knowledge on all dimensions of climate change and the social, economic, political, and cultural contexts of the issues. To share this knowledge efficiently, the IPCC must continue to improve how it communicates. As IPCC Vice-Chair, I helped implement and define the IPCC communication strategy, but we can achieve more. **As Chair, I would strive to strengthen the communication of scientific outcomes, lead a proactive approach in knowledge sharing towards different stakeholders and enhance the transparency and accountability of the assessment process.**

As a globally respected institution the IPCC has maintained its position of political neutrality and avoided being policy-prescriptive. While protecting this guiding principle, the IPCC must now move forward to become more policy relevant and solution-oriented. I believe that improved dialogue between the IPCC and policymakers is needed to achieve this goal. As Chair, I would ensure that the needs of policymakers can be expressed early in the process of defining IPCC activities. I would visit and engage with as many member-countries as possible to build a deeper understanding of what is needed and deliver this information to the IPCC executive committee. Timing is also key for policy relevance. **As Chair, I will align the IPCC process with the international agenda. The IPCC would then be able to deliver effective, useful and well-targeted scientific insights, advice, and intelligence.**

Contributing to the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals provide a vital framework for the analysis and action around climate change as they do for other critical areas of international action and progress. In turn, the IPCC's scientific knowledge can inform and guide efforts to achieve the delivery of the SDGs. **As IPCC Chair I will reinforce the relationship between Agenda 2030 and the assessment of climate change.** I am convinced that many synergies exist between climate action and the achievement of other SDGs; whether that is in adaptation or mitigation. When climate action, SDG 13, is better integrated with the other SDGs, this will not only improve the climate but also the well-being of people suffering the consequences of climate change.



Photo: Friendship NGO, Bangladesh

Climate justice for sustainable development pathways and just transition

Countries that contribute the least to climate change often experience the most severe impacts from climate change. As an international institution, the IPCC needs to take this double injustice into consideration and produce scientific information that facilitates shifting development pathways towards resilience, sustainability and a just transition. Climate sciences can help understand the entanglement of different issues, such as climate finance and international cooperation. This can contribute to sustainable development pathways and to a just transition. **As Chair, I will mainstream the principles of climate justice and just transition considerations into all IPCC activities.**

My vision for the future of climate and the IPCC

Inclusivity and interdisciplinarity for a better IPCC

I strongly believe that the IPCC must be inclusive, respectful of all people and cultures, and work across disciplines. While progress towards this goal has been achieved, more is needed to ensure the effective participation of developing country scientists, women, young scientists and under-represented disciplines. **As Chair, I will create and strengthen mechanisms, such as the IPCC scholarship programme, to enable the IPCC to reflect a wider range of perspectives.** To achieve this, establishing innovative collaborations with different types of stakeholders and organisations at different levels is of paramount importance.

"Vote @JPvanYpersele for @IPCC_CH Chair. If you are a young scientist and you think the IPCC has not been inclusive, Prof. Jean-Pascal will make it possible for young scientists like you to be included in the assessment process. Let's mobilize support for the man of the youths!"

Tambe Honourine Enow, Cameroon,
UN Climate Technology Centre and Network



Professor Jean-Pascal van Ypersele

- Full professor of climatology and sustainable development sciences at UCLouvain, invited professor in several other universities, and member of the Académie royale de Belgique.
- A physicist (Ph.D in 1986) and climate modeller who worked at NCAR (National Center for Atmospheric Research, USA), publications in an interdisciplinary perspective with natural and social scientists about climate change and sustainable development at global and regional scales for forty years.
- Co-organisation of several international scientific conferences on desertification, climate change, and sustainable development.
- Holder of numerous awards and distinctions, the most recent being the Harvard Leadership Prize from the Harvard Club of Belgium, in 2018.
- Extensive involvement in the IPCC since 1995. IPCC Vice-Chair from 2008 to 2015. Co-author of the first quadrennial UN Global Sustainable Development Report (2019), and member of the EU Mission Board on Adaptation to Climate Change, including Societal Transformation (2019-2021).
- Participation in nearly all UN conferences on climate issues since 1979, including almost all COPs (adviser to the Belgian delegation, and to the Fiji COP23 Presidency).
- Regularly briefing of Heads of State and Government, business, and stakeholders.

Professional Achievements

- Published peer-reviewed and other articles with scientists from many disciplines: from climate physics, to adaptation, mitigation, and climate negotiations.
- Active in IPCC since 1995; Lead Author for the Third Assessment Report (2001); elected Vice-Chair of IPCC Working Group II (Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability) in 2002; elected one of the three IPCC Vice-Chairs in 2008; Review Editor for AR4, SRREN, and AR5; co-author of the AR5 Synthesis Report; co-responsible for the preparation of a report to the IPCC Plenary on how to enhance the participation of scientists from developing countries in the IPCC; member of the Science Board of the IPCC Scholarship Programme until 2015 (for scientists from developing countries), and Vice-chair in charge of the IPCC Communication Action Team that designed the first IPCC Communication Strategy (2011-2015); has participated in dozens of outreach events related to the work of the IPCC
- Co-chaired numerous successful contact groups during IPCC meetings, for example for the AR5 Working Group I section on the drivers of climate change, for all the AR5 Working Group III figures and tables, and on the changes in the composition of the Bureau made in 2015

- In 2015, Belgian candidate for the IPCC Chair position; came in second position; received the votes from 56 out of 134 countries
- In 2016, created, with support from the Walloon government, the “Plateforme wallonne pour le GIEC” to improve the science-policy interface around climate issues in Wallonia, based on the IPCC work. The mandate of this platform was extended in 2019 to include work that should facilitate the implementation of science-based adaptation policies
- A seasoned science communicator, sought out by the media for interviews
- In 2016, appointed by UNESCO a co-author of the Declaration on Ethical Principles in relation to Climate Change (approved by the UNESCO assembly in November 2017)
- Appointed in 2016 by the UN Secretary General a co-author of the first quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR 2019)
- In 2019, appointed on the EU Horizon 2020 Mission Board for Adaptation to Climate Change, including Societal Transformation
- In 2021, appointed member of the Observatoire de la politique climatique (Luxembourg)

Selected publications (full list available on website)

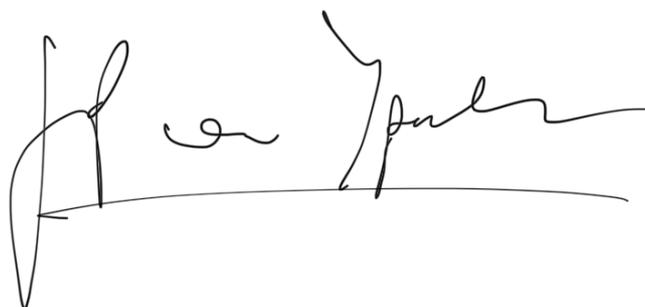
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- Bartiaux, F. and J.P. van Ypersele, 2006: The Relationships Between Population and Environment, in *Demography: Analysis and Synthesis. A Treatise in Population Studies*, edited by G. Caselli, J. Vallin & G. Wunsch, Elsevier, p. 383-396.
- van Ypersele, J-P., 2008: The fundamental injustice of climate change, in *Social Developments in the European Union 2007*, edited by Degryse, C. and P. Pochet, ETUI and Observatoire Social Européen, Brussels, ISBN 978-2-87452-122-5
- Smith, J., et al. (incl. J.P. van Ypersele), 2009: Assessing dangerous climate change through an update of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) "reasons for concern". *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA.*, Vol. 106, no. 11, p. 4133-4137.

- Core Writing Team [M. R. Allen et al. (incl. J.P. van Ypersele)], R.K. Pachauri and Leo Meyer, 2014. Climate Change 2014, Synthesis Report. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, 132 pp.
- Lynn, J., et al. (incl. J.P. van Ypersele), 2016. IPCC Expert Meeting on Communication, Meeting Report. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, 222 pp.
- O'Neill B., et al. (incl. J.P. van Ypersele), 2017. IPCC Reasons for Concern regarding climate change risks. Nature Climate Change 7, 28–37 (2017), doi:10.1038/nclimate3179
- Messerli, P., et al. (incl. J.P. van Ypersele), 2019, Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development, United Nations, New York. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/gsdr2019>

Main awards and honours

- Energy and Environment Award from the International Polar Foundation (2006)
- Francqui Chair at the Université libre de Bruxelles (2008)
- Member of the Royal Academy of Belgium (2009)
- Honorary Member of the Club of Rome (EU Chapter) (2010)
- Commandeur du Mérite wallon (2011), Grand Officier de l'Ordre de la Couronne (Belgium, 2014)
- Francqui Chair at KU Leuven – H.U. Brussel (2011)
- Harvard Leadership Prize from the Harvard Club of Belgium (2018)

"The IPCC needs to be the global voice of climate and climate sciences. It must work in the most inclusive way ever to help improve the well-being of all inhabitants of our common home: the only liveable planet in the solar system."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jean-Pascal van Ypersele', written over a horizontal line.

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