

# *Langues : Texte-type pour épreuve d'anglais*

## **Brexit could leave the European Union struggling with its climate targets**

Britain has been a consistently progressive driver of climate policy in the European Union. Given the EU's significance in international climate change negotiations, Britain's vote to leave the union has implications for EU policy [...].

The UK has been crucial to EU climate change policy in ways that have evolved over time. Britain's strong domestic emissions reductions have made more ambitious EU burden-sharing targets possible. This in turn gave credibility to the idea of Europe as a global leader on climate ambition – something that has become a cherished part of many European citizens' self-identity. Britain has also been a crucial bridge between the United States and Europe in the United Nations' climate negotiation process.

Yet the EU's climate policy ambition has arguably already declined over the past decade as it has struggled with a rising tide of resistance from more recalcitrant member states, chiefly Poland but also including, at various times, Italy, Hungary and Romania. Assuming that the EU manages to stave off any further disintegration, these voices will likely grow louder. [...]

While it has not always succeeded, British leadership has been an important balancing voice against these reluctant climate actors. Brexit has worrying consequences not just for EU climate policy but also for global progress on climate change.

One of the reasons for Britain's strong influence is its consistency across government on climate policy. This stands in contrast with other countries such as Germany and France, and even the European Commission itself, where internal divisions have sometimes meant that different ministries have pursued conflicting goals. [...]

In practical terms, the UK is the EU's second-largest economy and its second-biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, after Germany in both cases. [...] Domestic UK emissions reductions have historically been crucial to the EU's achievement of its targets. This is due to Britain's relatively large share of total emissions and to the UK's pursuit of ambitious domestic targets. The UK has legislated for steeper emissions targets than required and is aiming for an 80% reduction on 1990 levels by mid-century. Along with Sweden and Denmark, it has consistently pushed for more ambitious EU-level targets. [...]

The EU may therefore have to work out how to distribute its 2030 reductions among its 27 remaining members without the UK's contributions, a particular challenge given the relative size of the UK contribution. [...]

The United Nations' outgoing lead climate negotiator, Christina Figueres, has attempted to calm fears of EU climate policy derailment by urging Britain and the EU to continue working together even after Britain leaves the union.

It is indeed likely that Britain will remain somewhat embedded in the complex architecture of EU climate policy. Iceland, a non-EU member included in much of Europe's climate policy framework, provides a potential model for how this might work in practice.

But whatever arrangements are made, losing one of its most progressive voices on climate change will be a blow to Europe's leadership credentials.

*Natalie Latter (University of Western Australia), The Conversation, June 30, 2016*