

US allies welcome Biden presidency as major chance to tackle climate crisis

- **Macron and Johnson put climate at top of issues to confront**
- **Experts say window is still open to fulfil goals of Paris deal**



Emmanuel Macron, the French president, congratulates Joe Biden on his election win on a Monday call. Macron previously clashed with Trump over the climate crisis. Photograph: Ian Langsdon/EPA

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The leaders of America's closest allies have eagerly welcomed the incoming presidency of **Joe Biden** as a crucial opportunity to face down the unfolding climate crisis, following four years of dislocation under Donald Trump.

In congratulatory tweets sent in the wake of Biden's election win, both **Boris Johnson**, the British prime minister, and **Emmanuel Macron**, the French president, put climate change at the top of a list of issues they are keen to work on with the US president-elect once he assumes power in January.

Johnson, **who held a 25-minute conversation with Biden on Tuesday**, has said the election provides the “real prospect of American global leadership in tackling climate change” after a tumultuous period in which Trump removed the US from the Paris climate agreement and **set about dismantling every major domestic policy** aimed at reducing planet-heating emissions.

Macron, who also held a short call with Biden, has previously clashed with Trump over the climate crisis and directly warned the US Congress that there “is no planet B” if environmental calamity strikes. Meanwhile, **Justin Trudeau**, the prime minister of Canada, told a conference hosted by the Financial Times that he looks forward to tackling climate change with the US again, acknowledging that Trump’s time as president had been “unpredictable”.

Biden has vowed to rejoin the Paris deal, a prospect greeted with a sigh of relief among America’s traditional allies and providing **a welcome boost to key UN climate talks to be held in Scotland next year**. Todd Stern, who was the lead US negotiator in Paris, has said the difference between Trump and Biden on climate will be like “night and day.”

Biden will attempt to prod other countries to cut emissions more deeply by using US diplomatic clout, the lure of financial assistance for adaptation and by boosting investment in clean energy technology. Domestic progress will be trickier, with control of the senate likely to remain with Republicans unmoved by the need for sweeping climate action.

“I’m sure president-elect Biden will jump back into the climate space with full force,” said Kim Carnahan, who was the chief US climate negotiator in the Trump administration before exiting this year to join sustainability firm Engie Impact. “Off the bat I’m sure there will be some resentment to the US, but as a general rule every country I’ve spoken to wants the US back in. The window is still open to fulfill the Paris agreement and it can be done.”

The challenge is steep, however. Despite promises made by the international community in Paris to curb global heating, the world is on track to hit more than 3C in average warming, a situation that is already starting to supercharge storms, heatwaves and disastrous sea level rise.

Scientists say 2020 has a good chance of being the hottest year ever recorded, following soaring temperatures that have fueled enormous wildfires in places such as California and Australia and spurred further melting of ice in the Arctic.