Resolution on the outcome of the Bali Conference on Climate Change (COP 13 and COP/MOP 3)

2008/2510(RSP) - 31/01/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Following the debate in plenary, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the outcome of the Bali Conference on Climate Change (COP 13 and COP/MOP 3). It welcomed the decision taken by the Parties to launch a formal negotiation process for an international climate agreement for the period after 2012 with a view to achieving an agreement at the Fifteenth COP in Copenhagen in 2009. Parliament expressed its satisfaction that the Bali Action Plan contains a clear timetable, and stressed the constructive and leading role played by the EU at the Bali Conference.

Whilst welcoming the recognition by the Parties that IPCC AR4 represents the most authoritative assessment of climate change to date, Parliament regretted that it was not possible to make unambiguous references to science in relation to the necessary reductions of GHG emissions in the Bali Action Plan. It welcomed, however, the recognition of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that reductions of GHG emissions in the range of 25-40% compared to 1990 by industrialised countries as a group are required by 2020. Members recalled that industrialised countries, including those that have not yet ratified the Kyoto Protocol, must play a leading role in tackling climate change and commit themselves to reducing their GHG emissions by at least 30% by 2020 and by 60-80% by 2050 compared to 1990.

Sustainable economic development is a right for all developing countries. As an innovation in comparison to the Kyoto Protocol, the different situation of developing countries should be reflected in the commitments entered into, and emerging countries should accept limits on their emissions in accordance with their stage of development, the sectoral composition of their economies, their emission reduction potential and their technical and financial capacities. The next Conference/Meeting of the Parties in Poznan should focus on developing countries, and serious efforts must be made to achieve real progress regarding incentives, including market-based instruments, to avoid deforestation and encourage sustainable forestry, and the financing of improvements in the transfer of clean technologies in developing countries. Significant financial instruments should be developed within the framework of the EU's policies in order to help developing countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Parliament stressed that a "greening" of the EU's development policy is urgent, and regretted the very slow progress in this area, calling on the EU's leadership to make climate-change mitigation key priorities within EU development cooperation policies. It regretted that it was not possible to include a clear reference to the need to agree on binding emission cuts in aviation and maritime transport.

Parliament went on to call for an urgent review of EU biofuels policy, with particular emphasis on the life-cycle sustainability of each biofuel in terms of GHG reductions. Developing and implementing biofuel strategies as an energy option should take safeguard against any associated negative environmental, social and economic impact. The Commission was asked to propose robust standards and clear criteria for biofuel production.

As long as a level playing-field does not exist, the Commission should explore possibilities for industry to develop an innovative "climate-friendly" industry. Parliament called, therefore, for consideration to be given in the WTO to introducing temporary measures that favour the manufacture and export of climate-friendly products and innovative technology. It recognised that the credibility of EU negotiations relies on the success of Europe's domestic reduction efforts. Accordingly, Members called for the adoption of policies which will ensure that the EU achieves domestic reductions in GHG emissions of at least of 30% from their 1990 level by 2020, provided that other industrialised countries commit themselves to similar

GHG emission reductions and that more economically advanced developing countries make a contribution commensurate with their responsibilities and capacities. They acknowledged the obligation accepted by the EU – irrespective of the conclusion of a global agreement for the period after 2012 – to reduce GHG emissions by at least 20% from their 1990 level by 2020, and called for the adoption of policies that will support the spending of more funds on R&D. Parliament emphasised the historical responsibility of mainly industrialised countries as foremost producers of GHG emissions, calling on them to make a greater commitment to avoiding the natural disasters and social unrest which are bound to follow unless global warming is limited. It noted the initiative taken by the US administration to convene a further five meetings of the world's major emitters. The Commission and Member States concerned should make their participation conditional on concrete proposals from the hosts for short-term emission reduction targets which are consistent with the aims and objectives of the UNFCCC.

Lastly, Parliament felt it could and should play an important role as coordinator of a permanent interparliamentary forum on climate change.