Resolution on the Commission Green Paper on "Adapting to climate change in Europe - options for EU action"

2008/2541(RSP) - 10/04/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Following the debate on 10 April 2008, the European Parliament adopted by 516 votes to 47, a resolution tabled by the Temporary Committee on Climate Change on the Commission Green Paper on "Adapting to climate change in Europe - options for EU action". It stressed the **strong interconnection between adaptation and mitigation efforts** for limiting the consequences of climate change. Parliament asked the Commission to carry out a study on the economics of adaptation, to develop scenarios establishing a balance sheet of adaptation costs and benefits and to stimulate and anticipate economic action. It further underlined the importance of using a sectoral bottom-up approach taking into account the differences in Europe's natural habitats such as mountainous areas or island regions, and called on the Commission to chart the shifts in employment in both growing and shrinking sectors. Parliament considered that the EU had to undertake substantial efforts to increase technological development in adaptation measures in order to support its economy and transfer those technologies to the developing world. Development of effective technologies was an essential way in which to adapt to climate change. The next Conference/Meeting of the Parties in Poznan (COP 14) should focus on that issue.

Parliament addressed a series of recommendations to the Commission, inter alia:

-to support the scientific preparation of a common European database on vulnerabilities so as to understand how societal groups and the European cultural and national heritage would be affected;

-to coordinate the existing environmental data monitoring networks and to combine them with new structures, with a view to compiling databases containing homogeneous measurements that can be used to produce models enabling the identification of the action most urgently required;

-to examine how to develop a pan-European network of universities, social partners, civil society organisations, operational organisations, in particular national weather-forecasting organisations, in order to promote partnerships on adaptation;

-to carry out an analysis of existing European financial instruments and their use for climate change adaptation measures in their original fields of application and to indicate where additional funding would be needed;

-to consider including financial measures for adaptation in the next financial framework for regional policies and structural funds, as well as to propose that additional resources be allocated to finding innovative solutions to address climate change;

-to propose an EU-wide framework for adaptation planning and preparedness, bearing in mind the subsidiarity principle;

-to examine how to incorporate necessary adaptation in response to climate change into development plans and budget negotiations, and how to apply such measures to sectoral policies to steer public and private funding and investments;

Members believed that adaptation measures in the agricultural sector must work towards reducing vulnerability and increasing sustainability. The sector must promote new ways to manage water and other natural resources. Parliament stressed the importance of an increased need for rational use of water by means of "water demand management". The Commission and Member States should adopt integrative measures to ensure the availability and conservation of water, and promote innovative technologies to reduce drought and flooding risks.

Members regarded cooperation to support the poorer parts of Europe and the developing world as imperative, since those areas were likely to be the worst hit by climate change but least able to deal with its consequences. They regretted that the Green Paper did not sufficiently address the need for cooperation on adaptation between the EU and developing countries. They welcomed the Commission's initiative to launch a Global Climate Change Alliance, but stressed that it was currently grossly underfunded. Members also recognised a conditional link between development goals and both mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Climate change must be mainstreamed into all EU development cooperation, including existing partnership programmes such as the EUROMED dialogue or the EU-Africa energy partnership. Parliament called for significant and predictable financial instruments to be developed in the framework of EU policies, such as the Emission Trading Scheme, in order to assist developing countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change as well as to provide funds for adaptation policies within Member States.