

# 2050: The future begins today - Recommendations for the EU's future integrated policy on climate change

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The European Parliament adopted by 570 votes to 78, with 24 abstentions, a resolution making a series of recommendations for the EU's future integrated policy on climate change. This resolution is the result of the work carried out by the Temporary Committee on Climate Change, set up by the European Parliament on 25 April 2007.

The Parliament is deeply concerned about the fact that, as indicated by many recent scientific reports, climate change is both more rapid and more serious in terms of its adverse effects than was previously thought. It therefore calls on the Commission to closely monitor and analyse the latest scientific findings with a view to assessing, in particular, whether the EU 2°C target would still achieve the aim of avoiding dangerous climate change. In this context, it also recalls the essential objectives for the EU and other industrialised countries as a group, namely a medium-term target of a 25-40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, as well as a long-term reduction target of at least 80% by 2050, compared to 1990.

**The leading role of the European Union:** the resolution stresses that there is an urgent need – pursuing a horizontal approach – to incorporate global warming and climate change as new parameters into all spheres and policies, and to take the causes and consequences of global warming and climate change into account in every relevant area of EU legislation. It also supports the leading role of the European Union in international for a, while highlighting the urgent need for the EU and its Member States to meet the targets of the Kyoto Protocol in order to play this leading role in a credible way.

**Post-2012:** MEPs call on the Commission and the coming Council Presidencies to assume a leadership role in the international negotiations aimed at securing a post-2012 agreement and to reach a conclusion by the end of 2009, so that sufficient time remains to ratify the forthcoming climate change agreement. Moreover, they stress that the new climate change agreement should come into being on the principle of a "common but differentiated responsibility", with the countries of the industrialised world taking the lead in reducing their domestic emissions while the developing countries also commit themselves, in accordance with the Bali Action Plan, to taking nationally appropriate mitigation actions. In this context, the Commission and the Member States are called upon to attach the highest priority to energy efficiency and renewable resources in the context of development cooperation.

**Green New Deal:** the Parliament stresses the need not to capitulate in the face of the complexity of the problem of climate change but to show a visionary desire to make a difference, and to demonstrate leadership in response to the challenges with which it is confronted at this turning-point in energy and climate policy. It also stresses the need to face up to climate change and its effects by means of political and educational measures based on a long-term perspective. The Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to support the UN's call for a "Green New Deal". In the light of the financial crisis, it calls for the investments aimed at boosting economic growth to do so in a sustainable way, in particular by promoting green technologies.

**Detailed measures:** the resolution recommends detailed measures in the following main economic sectors: energy, biofuels, energy efficiency, mobility and logistics, tourism, carbon capture and storage,

agriculture and livestock breeding, forests, soil protection, water management, fisheries, waste treatment and resource management, adaptation measures, health, promoting the technology of the future, intelligent computer systems, education, training and awareness-raising.

The measures proposed by the Parliament include:

- the creation of a European renewable energy community to promote further research and pilot projects in this field;
- the development of an EU-wide supergrid accessible to all forms of electricity providers;
- the creation of solar energy partnerships with third countries in the Mediterranean region;
- stepping up still further the share in the energy mix of wind energy;
- the development of carbon capture and storage technology for coal and gas-fired power plants by giving incentives for demonstration projects and encouraging research;
- stepping up research and development of advanced biofuels and actively promote the development of a global biofuels standard;
- a binding goal of 20% in energy efficiency by 2020, proposed by the Commission, and to accompany that proposal with concrete interim reduction targets;
- a long-term target in the building sector in Europe should be net zero-energy performance in new residential buildings by 2015 and in new commercial and public buildings by 2020;
- reduced rates of VAT for renewable energy and for energy-saving goods and services;
- early and rigorous implementation of the 2006 requirements relating to the installation of smart meters in order to raise consumer awareness of energy use;
- a comprehensive policy mix of mutually supportive measures aimed at a sustainable transport policy comprising the development of vehicle technology (eco-efficient innovation), increased use of alternative energy sources for transport and the creation of distribution networks for clean fuels;
- promoting a shift to more environmentally friendly means of transport, by means of pricing measures and other incentives and by substantial investment in the necessary infrastructure, thus making public transport more attractive;
- an integrated approach in the aviation sector which will commit the aircraft industry worldwide, airlines and airport operators jointly to an emission reduction target as soon as possible and by 1 January 2013 at the latest;
- the adoption by the European Union and its Member States of a hydrogen-specific support framework, based on renewable energy sources;
- the development of more ecological types of tourism, such as social tourism, sport tourism or cultural tourism, while stressing that the tourist destinations of excellence should be those which respect and protect the environment;
- the inclusion of workplace climate-change audits in company reporting standards;
- the explicit inclusion of agriculture in a future integrated European climate policy and the elaboration of reduction targets for the emission of greenhouse gases;
- a clear economic incentive to be created for permanently preserving virgin forests or large forest areas by using them in a sustainable manner;
- strategies for the improvement of water use efficiency, water saving, rationalisation and limitation of water consumption, and improved consumer awareness concerning sustainable water consumption;
- percentage reduction targets on reducing, reusing and recycling waste and limits on the cross-border transport of mixed domestic waste in the EU;
- consider ways of accelerating the implementation of clean and energy-efficient technologies, such as direct subsidies to consumers investing in technologies, for instance solar panels, ground/air /water heat pumps and cleaner burning hearth appliance stoves;
- the development of new communication strategies to educate citizens and provide them with incentives to reduce emissions in an affordable way, e.g. by developing information on the carbon content of products and services.

**Financing and budgetary matters:** the Parliament stresses that the highest priority must be given to climate change and measures to combat it in the next multiannual financial framework. It calls on the Council to tackle the question of unused, earmarked funds from the EU budget, re-allocating these where necessary for climate policy purposes. Moreover, MEPs consider that the EU should make a financial commitment not only in the core areas of promoting and developing technologies to combat climate change and of climate-related development aid, but also in supporting cross-border adaptation measures, increased efficiency and aid for disasters. They also call for the establishment of a European Climate Fund and/or corresponding funds in the Member States.

Lastly, the Parliament calls for an agenda for action to combat climate change for the period 2009-2014, to be implemented. It calls on Parliament's relevant bodies to draw up and publish a version of this report for the general reader within three months of its adoption.