Resolution on the EU strategy for the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change (COP 15)

2009/2614(RSP) - 25/11/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 24 November 2009, the European Parliament adopted by 516 votes to 92, with 70 abstentions, a resolution tabled by the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, on the EU strategy for the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change (COP 15).

The resolution emphasises that by the end of this year in Copenhagen, the Parties need to reach a legally binding agreement on industrialised-country mitigation targets and financing and to establish a formal process to achieve a **legally binding comprehensive climate agreement in the first few months of 2010, coming into force on 1 January 2013**. It also stresses that, in order to secure continuing commitments after the Kyoto Protocol first commitment period expires, it is vital for the negotiations on a post-2012 agreement in Copenhagen to be concluded, according to MEPs.

Parliament urges the EU to continue to develop an external climate policy and to speak with one voice to maintain its leading role in the negotiations at COP 15.

The main issues dealt with in this resolution are as follows:

Reduction commitments

- the international agreement should be based on the principle of a ‘common but differentiated responsibility’, with the industrialised countries taking the lead in reducing their domestic emissions;
- the international agreement should ensure collective reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in the developed countries at the high end of the 25-40 % range for 2020 compared to 1990 levels;
- the resolution recalls that a long-term reduction target should be set for the EU and the other developed countries of at least 80 % by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. Given their economic weight, that China, India and Brazil should commit themselves to targets similar to those of the industrialised countries;
- in accordance with the Bali Action Plan, take nationally appropriate mitigation actions in the context of sustainable development, supported and enabled, in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner, by technology, financing and capacity-building from developed countries, having due regard, in technology transfers, to the protection of industrial property rights and to the special needs of the least developed countries;
- the international agreement should also ensure that developing countries as a group limit the growth of their emissions to 15 to 30 % below ‘business as usual’ in order to ensure that the 2ºC objective is achieved;
- the Copenhagen agreement should bind the parties to mandatory reductions and provide for sanctions at international level for non-compliance. The resolution calls for regular reviews in the agreement every five years;
- the EU should clarify under which conditions it would increase its reduction commitment, taking into account the fact that the latest scientific recommendations call for a commitment to a 40 % reduction in emissions. The EU should invite the members of the COP 15 to develop a common vision for the year 2050 and beyond.

Financing

- according to MEPs, an agreement in Copenhagen could provide the necessary stimulus for a ' **Sustainable New Deal**' boosting sustainable social and economic growth, promoting environmentally sustainable technologies, renewable energy and energy efficiency, reducing energy consumption and securing new jobs and social cohesion in both developed and developing countries;
- developed countries should **provide sufficient, sustainable and predictable financial and technical support** to the developing countries to allow them to commit themselves to the reduction of their greenhouse gas emissions, to adapt to the consequences of climate change and to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as to enhance capacity-building in order to comply with obligations under the future international agreement on climate change;
- commitments to provide for the required predictable financial support for climate change mitigation and adaptation in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) must be new and additional to ODA and independent from annual budgetary procedures in the Member States. The resolution recalls that the resources should be distributed not as concessional loans, but as grants;
- the EU is called upon to commit at least to the Commission's estimate of overall financing of **EUR 5-7 billion annually for the period 2010-2012**;
- the collective contribution by the EU towards developing countries' mitigation efforts and adaptation needs should not be less than **EUR 30 000 million per annum by 2020**, a figure that may increase as new knowledge is acquired concerning the severity of climate change and the scale of its costs;
- the international community is invited to increase significantly its financial support for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change for developing countries by exploring other innovative financial mechanisms (for example debt-for-nature swaps);
- a substantial part of the revenues generated by the auctioning of certificates in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), including auctioning for aviation and maritime transport, should be earmarked for enabling developing countries to fight and adapt to climate change;
- developed countries should envisage earmarking a percentage of their GDP for the creation of a cooperation fund for the realisation of clean energy technologies, independently of existing development aid funds.

Cooperation with developing countries

- the EU and its Member States should strengthen their existing climate partnerships with developing countries, and to enter into new partnerships where they do not currently exist, providing significantly increased financial support for technology development and transfer, agreement on intellectual property rights and institutional capacity-building;
- the Commission and the Member States should: (i) build the necessary links between climate change and the MDGs; (ii) increase substantially the budget for the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA). The Commission is urged to ensure that the GCCA becomes a clearing house for adaptation funding in developing countries, thus avoiding the creation of new bilateral EU initiatives.

Energy and energy efficiency

- there is an urgent need to improve energy efficiency on a global scale and to increase the share of renewable energy resources;
- an international shift towards a low-carbon economy will consider nuclear energy as an important part of the energy mix in the medium term. The issue of safety and security of the nuclear fuel cycle must be addressed in an appropriate manner at international level in order to ensure the highest possible level of safety;

- EU Member States are urged to step up their ambition on the energy efficiency package, notably on the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive recast which is currently being discussed, to enable a dynamic and cohesive agreement with the Council to be reached.

Adaptation: stressing the historical responsibility of developed countries for irreversible climate change, Parliament calls on the EU and its Member States:

- to assist developing countries in capacity building in order to adapt to climate change and to provide sufficient technological support for those countries most affected by a changing environment;
- to enhance action to support the urgent implementation of adaptation actions within the EU in order to save resources for future international action.

Technological cooperation and research

- the Copenhagen agreement should provide for Technology Action Programmes for key adaptation and mitigation technologies to provide support throughout the entire technology chain with objectives such as to considerably increase financing for mitigation and adaptation-related research, development and demonstration (RD&D);
- developed countries should invest more in research on novel and advanced technologies for sustainable and energy-efficient production processes; considers it essential to improve funding for international cooperation on climate change within the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).

A global carbon market

- although market solutions, including the development of a global carbon market, through 'cap and trade' mechanisms or taxation schemes in developed countries, are not the solution for developing countries in the near future, this must remain the long-term goal for all negotiations;
- a functioning global carbon market is essential for the EU economy. The resolution stresses the need for a comprehensive international post-2012 agreement stipulating comparable efforts to be made by other developed countries in order to overcome the risk of carbon leakage;
- the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is deemed a possible way to enable developing countries to participate in the carbon market and to provide them with modern and efficient technologies. The resolution underlines, however, that the use of offsets to meet emission reduction targets by developed countries cannot be counted as part of the responsibility of developing countries to mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions in an international agreement on climate change;
- stringent project quality standards must be part of future offsetting mechanisms, in order to prevent developed countries taking away the low-cost reduction options from developing countries, and to guarantee the high standard of such projects, with reliable, verifiable and real additional emission reductions that also support sustainable development in such countries. The CDM and Joint Implementation (JI) should be reformed, taking into account those project quality standards.

Land use change, deforestation, forest and natural resources degradation

- the EU and the Member States are urged to recognise the need to preserve forests and to integrate this aspect into an international agreement;
- significant financial support, as well as technical and administrative assistance, must be provided to developing countries to **halt gross tropical deforestation by 2020 at the latest**. Parliament invites the EU and its Member States to provide funding for the period 2010-2012 for early action in developing countries and supports the Commission's proposal to **create a Global Forest Carbon Mechanism (GFCM)** under the UNFCCC framework, based on a permanent-financing scheme;

- Member States should confirm their commitment to halting global deforestation and forest and land degradation, as well as desertification, by earmarking a significant part of the auctioning revenues from the EU ETS to reduce deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries;
- the EU is called upon to promote strong social and environmental standards for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD);
- practices followed in several sectors, including water management, ecosystem preservation, agricultural production, soil conditions, land use change, health, food security and disaster risk, have led to the causation and aggravation of climate change and that these dimensions should be included in the Copenhagen agreement.

Aviation and maritime transport

- MEPs insist that – in the light of the failure of the negotiations involving the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) – international aviation and shipping be incorporated into an agreement under the UNFCCC;

- MEPs urge that international agreements in the aviation and maritime sectors set the same binding targets as for other industry sectors; urges further that in a global framework at least 50 % of the allowances in this area be auctioned.

Lastly, Parliament believes that the EU delegation plays an important role in these negotiations on climate change, and therefore finds it unacceptable that the Members of the European Parliament that are part of that delegation were unable to attend the EU coordination meetings at the previous Conference of the Parties. It expects the European Parliament participants to have access to such meetings in Copenhagen on the basis of observer status at least, with or without speaking rights.