Resolution on the consequences of drought, fire, and other extreme weather phenomena: increasing the EU's efforts to fight climate change

2022/2829(RSP) - 15/09/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 469 votes to 34, with 44 abstentions, a resolution on the consequences of drought, fire, and other extreme weather phenomena: increasing the EU's efforts to fight climate change.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR and the Left groups.

According to the European Drought Observatory, in August 2022, 64 % of the continent was under a drought warning (with 17 % on drought alert). Preliminary data suggest the current drought is the worst for at least 500 years. Climate change has altered Europe's wind and weather patterns so that high-pressure systems persist, resulting in long periods with little or no rainfall, resulting in crop growing seasons becoming drier.

More ambition needed on mitigation and adaptation to climate change

Parliament underlined the importance of sustainable water management for guaranteeing food security and called on the Commission to refrain from proposing further EU legislation that endangers or risks endangering our food security. It stressed that these extreme weather conditions are a sign of the need for more ambitious action on climate change mitigation and adaptation and that the EU should play a leading role in this process and reinforce its efforts in all sectors. The EU should step up its climate action both on mitigation, to contain global warming to 1.5 °C compared to pre-industrial levels, and on adaptation to foster resilience.

The Commission is called on to urgently draw up a comprehensive **EU-wide climate risk assessment** paying special attention to the risks of droughts, forest fires, health threats, ecosystem vulnerabilities and the effect on critical infrastructures and networks. Parliament called for an EU climate resilience **stress test** for key infrastructure to be completed by summer 2023.

Civil Protection and Emergency Response

The resolution highlighted the importance of further developing and making full use of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism in relation to forest fires and other natural disasters. Members called for a significant **increase in the EUSF budget**, that will help regions to anticipate and mitigate effects of climate change and for the scope of the EUSF to be broadened so that it is also allowed to support more climate-resilient **restoration or new construction** of public and private infrastructure.

Parliament also called for the new permanent **rescEU fleet** to be created quickly and include with this an expansion of the current voluntary firefighting reserve. A **permanent EU civil protection force** is also needed, according to the resolution.

Forest Fires

The resolution called for an integrated response to forest fires in order to protect the EU's forests against the destruction caused by extreme climate events. It stressed that the restoration and reforestation of

diverse forests would assist with fire prevention and containment. Member States are called on to ensure the continued protection of our forests and to protect land from being reclassified as non-forest land following a forest fire, as this may encourage deliberate fires with the aim of being able to use the land for other uses not allowed before the fire.

Sustainable water use

The EU has to continue to adapt its food systems in order to make them more resilient in the long term. Members urged Member States to create buffer stocks of strategic feed and foodstuffs and to introduce irrigation systems that do not use surface or groundwater, such as rainwater storage or wastewater recycling, in combination with efforts to reduce overall water use. In this context, the resolution called on the Commission to present a comprehensive EU water strategy.

Parliament called on the Commission to support increased Member State efforts to increase the use of water reuse techniques, water-saving irrigation technologies and practices, green roof technologies, smart showers and toilets, in the water sector, including supply, sanitation and storm water management, and across all industrial, residential and commercial water cycles and applications.

International and Social Dimension

The resolution underlined the urgent need to scale up global action, both to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change. Parliament proposed that the Commission and the Member States should cooperate on the development of an international framework to address climate-induced displacement and migration both at international forums and in the EU's external action.

Lastly, there was a call for increased investments in education and awareness-raising for European citizens on natural disasters.