Resolution on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP 3 to be held in Kyoto from 1 to 10 December 1997

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The Commission communication responds to the mandate given by the Council of Ministers in March and June 1997. The effort to substantiate the EU's negotiating position by demonstrating the feasibility of ecologically compatible development is to be welcomed. The communication has already achieved one positive result: other key players, such as the United States and Japan, have been obliged to adopt an official position on the issue, thus paving the way for more specific and binding discussions in Kyoto. At the same time, the Committee notes that the failure to envisage any unilateral commitment on the part of the EU introduces an element of political weakness which only the Council meeting of 16 October could have remedied. The Council confirmed its desire to see "an effective protocol that provides legally binding objectives" adopted at Kyoto, and regretted the "absence or inadequacy of concrete negotiation offers from the major industrialized countries", but was very vague about the possibility of formulating and implementing the Community policies and measures needed to achieve such objectives. The Committee feels that the platform sketched out by the Commission can help to make the Kyoto conference a success, and to counter the scaled-down decisions for which support seems to be emerging in the United States and Japan. Only by assuming a practical, coherent commitment can the developed countries open the way to greater involvement of the developing countries, whose energy consumption is bound to increase. The United States wishes to make the Kyoto negotiations conditional on agreements on emission trading and joint implementation between the developed and developing countries; but these steps represent a further stage which can only be reached if the developed countries work in concert to reduce their emissions.