Climate change: energy dimension, preparation of the Kyoto Conference, December 1997

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The ESC has repeatedly looked at strategies to reduce CO2 emissions and other "greenhouse gases". The Committee underlines that climate policy is a global policy. It feels the EU should enter into negotiations with the USA and Japan before the Kyoto Conference. The Economic and Social Committee believes that the scientific basis for the forecasts used by the Commission to draw up its climate policy objectives is narrow and should be extended, particularly in regard of the relationship between economic growth and energy consumption, the impact of technological innovations and the objectives for climate relevant gases other than CO2. The ESC points out that climate policy cannot be implemented unless its objectives are integrated into other policy areas. As such more emphasis should be placed on transport policy. Taking into account the SAVE programme and the Altener programme the ESC believes that the action plan could be expanded to include arrangements of the kind already introduced by regulatory means in some Member States, such as the non-fossil fuel obligation, or the obligation to buy electricity generated by renewables. The ESC therefore believes that, if there is to be any significant reduction in CO2 emissions, nuclear energy together with renewables will have to play key roles. However, the continued, or even expanded, use of nuclear energy requires solving problems of operating safety and waste disposal. The Economic and Social Committee would like to collaborate in drawing up the action plan to implement climate policy in the EU.