Resolution on climate change in the run-up to the Buenos-Aires Conference, November 1998, towards an EU Post-Kyoto Strategy

1998/2602(RSP) - 03/06/1998 - For information

OBJECTIVE: to define an interactive process for developing a global strategy to apply the commitments made by the Community at the Kyoto conference on climate change. CONTENT: The European Union succeeded during negotiations at Kyoto in persuading its main partners to accept the application of legally-binding targets with a view to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. The acquis of the Kyoto Protocol for the Community and its Member States involves: - setting legally-binding targets for reductions in a basket of 6 gases, including 3 so-called traditional gases (carbon dioxide, methane and et nitrous oxide) and 3 industrial gases (hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorinated hydrocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride); - reducing emissions of these 6 gases in the EC and its Member States by 8% in relation to 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012 (with tangible results from 2005 onwards); - distributing commitments between Member States ("Community bull") in order to split up the "pollution load" and fulfil obligations jointly; - implementing so-called flexibility mechanisms, i.e. a system for trading emission rights (whereby a Member State unable to achieve the required level of emissions would sell some of its emission rights to other parties), a procedure for joint application of emission rights (joint implementation of projects with additional reductions in emissions in the country hosting the project) and a "clean" development mechanism (or implementation of projects with no precise emission reduction targets); - implementing a stronger information exchange strategy between the Member States. If these commitments are to be applied, the Community needs to define a global strategy which incorporates all sectors of the economy and applies to the possible scope for action both internally and internationally. In order to develop this strategy, the Community and its Member States need to implement an interactive process which allows them to coordinate individual actions, exchange information and identify the scope for action to achieve the reduction targets. This will involve, at the very least: 1) accepting the principle of shared responsibility between the Community and its Member States (by developing sectoral policies with a view to achieving the general target set at Kyoto and defining individual responsibilities in each sector so that efforts can be better divided); 2) defining the implications of the intracommunity flexibility mechanism: the Commission considers that an approach whereby emission rights are traded at Community level could facilitate the administrative implementation of the system enormously and prevent the emergence of new trade barriers; 3) implementing a credible monitoring mechanism in order to monitor progress made by all the parties involved and ensure that commitments are respected; 4) establishing a solid dialogue with the other parties in order to ensure full application of the Kyoto commitments (including developing countries). The Council is called upon to approve the principles described in the communication so that a global strategy for the application of the Kyoto commitments can be defined. For their part, Member States should communicate their application strategies to the Commission, together with their views on the Community contribution to the strategy, by the end of 1998, so that the Commission can publish a final communication containing the EU's global strategy for implementing the Kyoto commitments in 1999.