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

1998/2602(RSP) - 17/09/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on climate change in the run up to the conference in Buenos Aires in November 1998 based on the Commission communication on the implementation of a strategy for applying the principles of the Kyoto Conference. Regretting the limitations of the Commission's strategy paper, it called on the Commission and the Member States to take a lead in brokering an agreement on a set of common principles and a negotiating framework beyond Buenos Aires based on the following principles: - an agreement to have a worldwide binding limit on global emissions consistent with a maximum atmospheric concentration of 550 ppmv CO2 equivalent; - initial distribution of emission rights according to the Kyoto targets; - progressive convergence towards an equitable distribution of emission rights on a per capita basis by an agreed date in the next century; - across the board reductions in emission rights thereafter in order to achieve the reduction recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); - an agreement to have a quantitative ceiling on the use of flexibility mechanisms that will ensure that the majority of emission reductions are met domestically in accordance with the spirit of the Kyoto Protocol; - an adequately financed mechanism for promoting technology transfer from Annex 1 to non-Annex 1 countries of the Kyoto Protocol. Pending agreement to such a set of common principles, the European Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to bring forward the policies and measures that the European Union must undertake in order to meet its Kyoto commitments. The European Parliament called for early ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in order to ensure achievement of the agreed reductions. It was committed to ensuring that the Protocol secured real reductions in greenhouse gases emissions from industrialised countries by 2008 /2012 and would work to ensure that the COP 4 in Buenos Aires agreed to unambiguous, clear and fair rules to regulate joint implementation, clean development mechanisms and emissions trading. The European Parliament called for a Green Paper on the application of economic and fiscal instruments targeted at climate change and the removal of counterproductive subsidies. It asked for the adoption of a directive introducing a tax on energy and carbon dioxide emissions and the expedition of a directive restructuring the Community framework for the taxation of energy products. It called on the European Union to support proposals for meetings to prepare for COP 4 in Buenos Aires (Japan in September 1998 and Canada in October 1998). Parliament considered that the Commission communication and the commitment by the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from passenger cars, (COM(98)0495) did not go far enough in that: - there were no arrangements for the continuation of the commitment should one or more of the assumptions made by the ACEA and the Commission not hold true; - the "estimated target range" of 165-170 g CO2/km for 2003 referred to in the ACEA commitment is too imprecise; - there is no description of the procedure for a possible revision in 2003; - the modus operandi of a joint ACEA-Commission monitoring system remains imprecise; - no provision has been made in the eventuality that manufacturers who are members of ACEA fail to comply with their commitments; - the proposed procedure for reducing carbon dioxide emissions from passenger cars is only worthwhile if the Commission simultaneously concludes identical agreements with manufacturers who import vehicles into the European Community; The European Parliament recalled that Parliament and the Council had set an objective of 120 g/km (5l/100 km for petrol engines and 4.5l /100 km for diesel engines) as a mean value for carbon dioxide emissions in 2005. This objective could only be attained if taken in conjunction with tax incentives and uniform rules for indicating the mean consumption of new vehicles. Finally, Parliament stated that it could only accept the procedure announced by the Commission once all these questions had been satisfactorily resolved.