Climate change: implementation of the first phase of the European programme

2002/2072(COS) - 25/09/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution drafted by Anneli HULTHEN (PES, Sweden) on the Climate Change programme. (Please refer to the document dated 18/06/02.) Despite the proposed measures at EU level, national responsibility for achieving climate-protection objectives still applies and national margins of manoeuvre must be retained. Each member country must adhere to the quotas already allocated to it under the burden sharing arrangements. Control mechanisms on pollution prevention, such as energy taxation and emission trading, must be co-ordinated so that price relations in the long term develop in such a way that low carbon dioxide emissions cost less than high emissions. Subsidies which conflict with emission reduction targets e.g. aid to the coal industry must be phased out simultaneously. Those sectors which are not involved with emission trading must be subject instead to a pollution-related levy which is revenue and competition neutral and coordinated and harmonised on a Europe wide basis. On the question of energy, Parliament pointed out that there is an urgent need to introduce minimum efficiency requirements for end-use equipment so that the least efficient equipment disappears from the market. Energy saving with no loss of convenience is possible in this area. In many cases the cost is recouped within a few months or years. The Commission is asked to submit proposals by the end of the year. With regard to transport issues, economic instruments on market terms must favour fuels and technologies with low or zero emissions. A proposal for uniform fuel taxation is positive, but minimum levels are needed to avoid Member States having to reduce their levels and depriving them of a means of honouring their share of EU commitments. The Commission and Council's hesitance over tax harmonisation in the transport sector and the lack of comprehensive legislative instruments in conjunction with the simultaneous adoption of the directive on trading in greenhouse gas emission allowances may lead to undesirable distortions between rail and road, for example. There needs to be prompt proposals for effective control mechanisms.