Resolution on climate change

2006/2680(RSP) - 14/02/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on climate change by 616 votes in favour to 25 against with 30 abstentions, in response to the Commission's paper "Limiting Global Climate Change to 2 degrees Celsius - the way ahead for 2020 and beyond". It stressed the urgency of taking concrete action at global level to tackle climate change, as well as the need for political leadership to drive the process forward.

The EU strategy on climate change should be based on the following key objectives :

1. to limit the average global temperature increase to 2°C above pre-industrialisation levels;
2. to undertake overall emission reductions for all industrialised countries of 30% in comparison with 1990 emission levels by 2020 with a view to achieving a reduction in the order of 60 to 80% by 2050.

Parliament regretted the lack of clarity of the Commission's 'energy and climate package' with regard to the target for GHG emission reductions for 2020. An overall 30% reduction for all industrialised countries is necessary to have a reasonable chance of attaining the EU objective of limiting the average temperature increase to 2°C. The EU must base all internal policies and measures on the reduction target of 30% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels.

In order to reach agreement at international level on a 30% reduction of GHG emissions in all industrialised countries, the European Union has to focus not only on environmental policy but also on foreign policy and international trade policy, as well as on a willingness to change demand for energy and other natural resources.

Energy policy is a crucial element of the EU global strategy on climate change. Diversification of renewable energy resources and a switch to the most energy-efficient technologies has great potential for emission reductions while ensuring less energy dependency on external sources. Parliament added that there is a huge potential for **emission reductions** in the field of energy efficiency. It called on the Commission and Member States to adopt ambitious measures and targets in this field and to explore the possibility of going above the 20% reduction target proposed by the Commission. With well balanced national tax/levy systems, energy efficiency can be increased in Member States and unnecessary energy consumption can be prevented. The Commission and Member States were urged to scrutinise the possibility of establishing an EU-wide tax system aimed at promoting a **low-carbon economy**, encouraging the use of the best available technologies and production processes and more sustainable modes of consumption to this end.

Parliament underlined that energy consumption was increasing most in the **transport sector** and that road transport contributes to roughly 25% of the Community's CO2 emissions. There must be binding measures for the transport sector, including aviation, to make emission reductions equivalent to those in other sectors by 2020 and for the development of more integrated and greener public transport. The Commission was also asked to impose a **binding target of 120 grams per kilometre** by 2012 for new passenger cars marketed in the EU.

Noting the proposal of a binding target to increase the **level of renewable energy** in the EU energy mix to 20% by 2020, Parliament felt that this was a good starting point, but considered that this target should be increased to 25% of the EU energy mix. It also pointed to the absence of binding targets for individual sectors and urged such targets notably for electricity generation, heating and cooling.

The Commission's proposed binding minimum target for **biofuels** of 10% of vehicle fuels in 2020 was noted, but MEPs believed a figure of 12.5% would also be realistic and desirable. They stressed the importance of sustainable production of biofuels, and called on the Commission to introduce a certification scheme and standards (e.g.technical legislation) allowing sustainable production of biofuels.

With a reference to the Stern Review, Parliament underlined the **economic, social and health costs of inaction**, which would cause damage corresponding to 5-20% of global GDP per year, whereas the cost of a sound climate policy and investment in clean technologies is put at between 0.5% and 1% of global annual GDP up to 2050.

The resolution called for targets to be set for **ultra-low or non-CO2 emitting energy technologies**, so as to supply 60% of electricity by 2020. Lastly, it states that cutting global emissions must not lead to other threats such as **nuclear proliferation** or terrorism. Nuclear power should remain excluded from the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation or other mechanisms aimed at rewarding emission reductions in developing countries.