

Climate change

European Parliament resolution on climate change
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14 February 2007

The European Parliament ,

- having regard to the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the second session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 2) held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6 to 17 November 2006,
- having regard to its previous resolutions relating to climate change, and in particular those of 16 November 2005 on 'Winning the Battle against Global Climate Change'(1) and of 26 October 2006 on the European Union strategy for the Nairobi Conference (COP 12 and COP/MOP 2)(2) ,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions entitled 'Limiting Global Climate Change to 2 degrees Celsius – The way ahead for 2020 and beyond' (COM(2007)0002) ,
- having regard to the conclusion formally approved on 2 February 2007 at the 10th Session of Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), held in Paris, as a contribution to the IPCC Fourth Assessment report describing the current knowledge of the human and natural drivers of climate change and providing an estimate of projected future climate change,
- having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas the recent extreme weather events, such as the devastating storm Kyrill, have led to an even more intensive debate on climate change,
 - B. whereas a single extreme weather event cannot be directly linked to climate change, but the fact cannot be ignored that many scientists see the increased intensity of extreme weather events as having a link to climate change,
 - C. whereas recent scientific reports give cause for concern that the processes of climate change that are already underway may accelerate due to various forms of positive feedback,
 1. Stresses 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;
 2. Welcomes, in this context, the fact that both the Commission and the Presidency-in-Office have put climate change at the core of their political agenda;

3. Urges the European Union to maintain its leading role in the negotiations with a view to a post-2012 international framework on climate change and to maintain a high level of ambition in future discussions with its international partners;
4. Urges the European Union to demonstrate its resolve by addressing climate change through measurable progress in reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and meeting its domestic and international emission reduction targets;
5. Recognises that the EU's share of GHG emissions - which according to the Fourth national communication from the European Community under UNFCCC (COM(2006)0040) amounts to 14% - may appear low; stresses, however, that, when measured in terms of per capita emissions, the EU share is among the highest in the world; in order to narrow these differences, reminds the Commission and the Member States of their obligations under the Kyoto Protocol and Marrakesh Accords to ensure complementarity of their use of flexible mechanisms;
6. Stresses the need to accelerate significantly international negotiations on the post-2012 framework so as to ensure that there is no gap between the first and second commitment periods under the Kyoto Protocol and give the international community time to plan the necessary measures; reiterates its call for an agreement to be reached by the end of 2008 or, at the very latest, by 2009;
7. Underlines that the EU should base its strategy on the assumption that an agreement will be achieved at international level on a post-2012 framework on climate change; believes, therefore, that it is premature to discuss at this stage a fall-back strategy in case such an international agreement is not reached;
8. Recalls that, as set out in its abovementioned resolutions of 16 November 2005 and 26 October 2006, and partly acknowledged by the Commission in its communication, the EU strategy on climate change should be based on the following key objectives :
 - i) to limit the average global temperature increase to 2°C above pre-industrialisation levels;
 - ii) 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;
9. Regrets the lack of clarity of the Commission's 'energy and climate package' with regard to the target for GHG emission reductions for 2020; emphasises that 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;
10. Insists that the EU must base all internal policies and measures on the reduction target of 30% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels;
11. Underlines that, 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, and that this broader picture has, therefore, to be part of the debate on the strategy to achieve the abovementioned objective ;

12. Considers that economically developed Member States have exported a large amount of their energy- and natural resource-consuming activities and technologies to less developed countries, where the same activity causes possibly higher GHG emissions; therefore urges the Commission and Member States to establish policies to prevent such practices;

13. Insists on the specific responsibility of developed countries to tackle climate change at world level; calls, therefore, on Annex I Parties to the UNFCCC to meet their existing commitments and to take on ambitious targets for a second commitment period after 2012; calls, moreover, on those industrialised countries that have not ratified the Kyoto Protocol to reconsider their position, to take vigorous domestic measures and to play an active role in future international negotiations, with a view to their participation in the future climate change regime;

14. Calls on the Commission and Member States to investigate the possibility of adopting border adjustment measures applicable to trade in order to offset any short-term competitive advantage that producers in industrialised countries without carbon constraints might have;

15. Reiterates its proposal to revise the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) with the goal of harmonising the allocation method on the basis of benchmarks and auctioning; proposes that the cost-free allocation of emission certificates should be reduced and suggests to the Member States that the money generated by, for instance, auctioning should be given back to the citizens and enterprises affected;

16. Agrees with the Commission that non-Annex I Parties to the UNFCCC have to be further involved in the process, but underlines that developing countries cannot be treated as one block and that activities undertaken by or within developing countries must be differentiated on the basis of their particular national circumstances; further emphasises that the least developed countries should not be required to take on any commitments;

17. In order to ensure an international level playing field, calls on the Commission and Member States to consider proposing sectoral targets for energy-intensive export industries in countries without binding emission reduction commitments as a supplement to binding emission targets for industrialised countries;

18. Stresses that energy policy is a crucial element of the EU global strategy on climate change and that 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;

19. Believes that the current inefficiency of many electricity power plants is a major contributor to the problem of global warming and calls on the Commission to bring forward proposals requiring all Member States to ensure that the energy released as a by-product of electricity generation is harnessed through combined heat and power technology;

20. Considers that there is a huge potential for emission reductions in the field of energy efficiency; calls 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;

21. Considers that with well balanced national tax/levy systems, energy efficiency can be increased in Member States and unnecessary energy consumption can be prevented;
22. Furthermore calls on the Commission and Member States 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;
23. Calls on the Member States to fulfil their commitments by taking the appropriate measures to ensure the prompt implementation of Directive 2002/91/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2002 on the energy performance of buildings(3) , which entered into force on 4 January 2003, whose cost-effective savings within the building sector are estimated at around 22%; calls therefore on the Commission to open proceedings against those Member States which have not yet taken adequate measures, as requested, to implement Directive 2002/91/EC;
24. Underlines that energy consumption is increasing most in the transport sector and that road transport contributes to roughly 25% of the Community's CO₂ emissions; calls, therefore, for 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, respecting the environment and natural resources;
25. Stresses the urgent need to reduce CO₂ emissions from cars and therefore insists that the Commission impose a binding target of 120 grams per kilometre (gpk) by 2012 for new passenger cars marketed in the European Union;
26. Reiterates its call for aviation and maritime transport emissions to be included in international greenhouse gas reduction commitments for the post-2012 period, and calls for renewed efforts to introduce kerosene taxes at EU and global level;
27. Notes the proposal of a binding target to increase the level of renewable energy in the EU energy mix to 20% by 2020 as a good starting point, but considers that this target should be increased to 25% of the EU energy mix;
28. Notes the absence of binding sectoral renewables targets; points out that these would bring about a real reduction in GHG emissions in order to tackle climate change; urges the Commission to propose, in addition to the general target, the submission of sector-specific targets, notably for electricity generation, heating and cooling, by Member States for renewable energy taking into account their different situations as proposed by the impact assessment of the Renewable Energy Roadmap (COM(2006)0848);
29. Reiterates that heating and cooling with renewable energy offers huge potential for a cost-effective reduction of CO₂ and of dependence on fossil fuels; regrets that the Commission has not submitted a proposal for a directive to support heating and cooling with renewable energies as promised to the European Parliament but notes that legislative measures in the field are still planned by the Commission;

30. Reiterates with insistence its recommendations for a proposal on heating and cooling from renewable sources of energy contained in its resolution of 14 February 2006(4) ;

31. Notes the Commission proposal for a binding minimum target for biofuels of 10% of vehicle fuels in 2020; takes the view that a target of 12,5% would also be realistic and desirable; underlines the importance of the sustainable production of biofuels; calls on the Commission to introduce a certification scheme and standards (e.g.technical legislation) allowing sustainable production of biofuels which is applicable to biofuels produced within, and imported into, the European Union;

32. Notes that the Commission recognises in the medium term the important role of fossil fuels and the possibility of undertaking further studies to reduce their carbon intensity in line with the 2°C target for CO₂ reduction; considers that this should include continuous modernisation and improvement of their efficiency; the development of a new generation of installations; the further development of an efficient and economical method of carbon capture and storage in relation to coal, gas and oil, in accordance with the decisions taken by the European Technology Platform for Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Plant, and the removal of barriers posed by EU legislation; recognises the role of carbon capture and storage technologies in reducing greenhouse gas emissions;

33. Supports the proposed energy partnership with Africa; however, strongly recommends that a similar partnership be established with China and India as well, bearing in mind the very rapid growth of GHG emissions in those countries and the urgent need to assist them in capacity-building as well as investments in carbon-free, low-carbon and energy-efficient technologies (with special attention to renewables), while insisting that the EU work with the relevant regions to stop tropical deforestation and instead encourage afforestation and reforestation; proposes, furthermore, that energy cooperation with Russia, Ukraine, North African and Caspian countries be stepped up;

34. Considers that significant efforts to reduce emissions can go hand in hand with economic development and are even a prerequisite for sustainable economic development in the coming decades; reiterates that environmental technologies can give the European Union a competitive edge while greatly contributing to emission reductions; notes that environmental technologies are, therefore, at the heart of a sustainable development strategy compatible with the EU's Kyoto commitments and the Lisbon Strategy;

35. Underlines economic, social and health costs of inaction shown, inter alia, by the Stern Review on the economics of climate change; recalls that the absence of action 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 estimated at between 0.5% and 1% of global annual GDP up to 2050, without taking account of ancillary environmental and health benefits; recognises that delaying action will increase the risk of adverse environmental effects and mitigation costs;

36. Recognises that climate change is causing serious environmental problems requiring immediate EU and international action; believes that by 2050 the overwhelming proportion of EU energy needs must come from carbon-free sources or be produced with technologies which withhold greenhouse gas emissions, with a

focus on energy saving, efficiency and renewable energies, and that there is therefore a need to set out a clear roadmap for attaining this objective; calls on the Commission to set ambitious but realistic targets for ultra-low or non-CO₂-emitting and CO₂-neutral energy technologies to supply 60% of EU electricity demand by 2020, in support of European climate and security-of-supply objectives;

37. Takes the view that research in this field should be boosted and clear environmental performance targets should be adopted in order to encourage the development and use of better and more environment-friendly technologies;

38. Maintains that reducing global emissions must not lead to other threats such as nuclear proliferation or terrorism; therefore believes that nuclear power should remain excluded from the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation or other mechanisms aimed at rewarding emission reductions in developing countries;

39. Encourages much greater direct involvement in mitigation efforts at European citizen level; calls on the Commission therefore to intensify its awareness-raising activities concerning the urgency of the situation with the aim of informing individuals about their role in controlling climate change;

40. Calls again on the European Union and its Member States to adopt an ambitious policy of technology partnerships with and transfers of clean technologies to developing countries, in order to help them develop their economies and increase their welfare in a more sustainable way;

41. Calls on the Commission to evaluate climate change repercussions on the increase in ground temperature, the reduction of rains and the groundwater status; considers it especially important to study the effects of the reduction of the area of cultivable land as a source of biomass and as a carbon pool; underlines the importance of certain agricultural management practices;

42. Calls for all of its relevant committees and delegations to work together closely on climate change, so that its industrial policy, energy policy and transport, agriculture, research and development and other initiatives are better coordinated with climate change targets, and so that climate change is regularly raised at interparliamentary delegation level and in the context of the Transatlantic Legislative Dialogue;

43. Calls on the three Presidencies (Germany, Portugal and Slovenia) in 2007 to ensure that the momentum on climate change is accelerated, whilst increasing the level of political commitment and the number of international partners within the process at international level;

44. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Secretariat of the UNFCCC, with the request that it be circulated to all non-EU contracting parties.

- (1) OJ C 280 E, 18.11.2006, p. 120.
- (2) Texts Adopted , P6_TA (2006)0460.
- (3) OJ L 1, 4.1.2003, p. 65
- (4) OJ C 290 E, 29.11.2006, p. 115.