Resolution on an EU strategy for a comprehensive climate change agreement in Copenhagen and the adequate provision of financing for climate change policy

2009/2548(RSP) - 11/03/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 20 February 2009, the European Parliament adopted by 610 votes to 50, with 25 abstentions, a resolution tabled by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety on an EU strategy for a comprehensive climate change agreement in Copenhagen and the adequate provision of financing for climate change policy. It recalls that negotiations on a comprehensive international agreement on climate change consistent with the objective of limiting global temperature increases to below 2ºC are due to be concluded in Copenhagen in December 2009. The European Union will agree on its negotiating position at the Spring 2009 European Council.

Parliament underlines that the EU must maintain a leading role in international climate policy, stressing the importance of the EU speaking with one voice in order to maintain its credibility in this role. It calls for the EU actively to pursue a Copenhagen agreement which takes into account the most recent scientific reports on climate change, commits the parties to stabilisation levels and temperature targets that provide a strong probability of avoiding dangerous climate change, and allows for regular reviews to ensure that targets are in line with the latest science. The Commission's proposals in this area are welcome.

Members note that , in order to limit the global average temperature increase to not more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels, it is necessary not only that developed countries significantly reduce their emissions but also that developing countries contribute to the attainment of this objective. They emphasise the responsibility of industrialised countries for providing sufficient financial and technical support to the developing countries to give them incentives to commit themselves to the reduction of their greenhouse gas emissions. A majority of such funds must be new and additional to Official Development Assistance (ODA).

In the current financial crisis, the EU's objective of fighting climate change can be combined with major new economic opportunities to develop new technologies, to create jobs and to enhance energy security. An agreement in Copenhagen could provide the necessary stimulus for such a 'Green New Deal'.

Parliament calls for the European Council to aim for an international agreement with industrialised countries achieving collective greenhouse gas emissions reductions at the high end of the 25-40% range, and for those reductions to be domestic. It is concerned about the lack of precision regarding the level of the EU's financial responsibility in the Commission Communication entitled 'Towards a comprehensive climate change agreement in Copenhagen' and calls on the European Council, when adopting a negotiating mandate for the Copenhagen conference, to make tangible commitments on financing that are consistent with the global efforts needed in order to limit the average temperature increase to well below 2°C. Such commitments on financing should include a pledge by Member States to use a significant part of the auctioning revenues generated by the EU ETS to finance actions to mitigate climate change in developing countries which will have ratified the international agreement on climate change. However, as less than 50% of EU emissions are covered by emission trading, it is necessary to include other sectors of the economy in Member States when it comes to the effort of financing these actions. Such commitments must provide for predictable financing for mechanisms set up in the UNFCCC context which are additional to ODA and independent from annual budgetary procedures in the Member States. Parliament stresses the need for clarity regarding the role of private capital in the investment necessary.

It considers it of the utmost importance to adopt a more comprehensive action plan on the future financing of climate policy, which would cover all relevant sources of financing. The Commission Communication is a good starting point, but it must be strengthened with clearly defined measures. Parliament considers that the collective contribution by the EU towards developing countries' mitigation efforts and adaptation needs should not be less than EUR 30 000 million per annum by 2020, a figure that may increase as new knowledge is acquired concerning the severity of climate change and the scale of its costs.

It calls on the Commission to abandon its previous resistance to the inclusion of forestry in emissions trading schemes.

Members believe that it is necessary for the EU to show leadership in the area of finance by providing concrete negotiating figures at an early stage, in order to mobilise sufficient domestic public support, to encourage developing countries to adopt ambitious binding reduction targets, and to encourage other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development member countries to contribute in a similar manner.

Lastly, Parliament insists that those Member States that are not already on track to meet the Kyoto target should intensify their efforts.