



Climate change: European Parliament at COP15 - a voice of ambition

Fighting climate change is a priority for the European Parliament. Together with the governments of the EU Member States, the European Parliament is co-legislator on EU climate legislation. Parliament is determined to ensure that the EU plays a leading role, not only in the international negotiations but also through its own practical measures against climate change.

In order to ensure that the EU can achieve its emission reduction targets in practice and is well-prepared for the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, the European Parliament passed the EU's own climate and energy package in December 2008. This package improves and extends the EU emission trading scheme and introduces national emission reduction commitments that have to be achieved through the sectors that are not part of the emission trading system.

The climate and energy package enables the EU to offer a unilateral commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20% from 1990 levels by 2020. The EU has also pledged to cut these emissions by 30% or more if a binding and sufficiently ambitious international agreement is reached in Copenhagen.

As co-legislator, Parliament was thus heavily involved in the vital groundwork for the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference and will again be heavily involved in ensuring that the outcome is put into proper legal effect, where necessary by amending EU climate legislation.

The need to reach an agreement on a Post-Kyoto treaty has been reiterated in many of Parliament's resolutions and reports. The European Parliament wants an ambitious, global and comprehensive agreement to prevent the world warming up by more than 2°C, and to ensure that economic growth becomes sustainable.

Parliament will be represented by an official delegation of 15 members during the high-level segment of the 15th UN Conference of the Parties (COP) on Climate Change in Copenhagen, between 14 and 18 December 2009. Parliament's President, Jerzy Buzek will also attend the conference.

The European Parliament has passed a resolution on 25 November 2009, setting out its expectations on the outcome of the negotiations:

The European Parliament's expectations for the Copenhagen climate change summit in December include an ambitious and legally binding agreement that will require emission reduction targets for developed and developing countries as well as financial commitments to mitigate emissions and to adapt to existing climate change.

The European Parliament calls on EU government leaders to demonstrate political leadership to make a success of the summit. Future generations might not be able to control climate change if global action is further delayed. Unrestricted climate change will increase the potential for conflicts over natural resources as a result of shrinking arable land, growing water scarcity or deforestation.

The Copenhagen summit should at least result in a binding agreement on climate change mitigation targets for industrialised countries and on financing. Also, a formal process should be established to achieve a comprehensive legally binding post-2012 agreement by early next year. This agreement should become active on 1 January 2013.

A couple of weeks ahead of the COP15 meeting in Copenhagen in December, MEPs call heads of state and government to give this matter top priority and demonstrate political leadership. They urge the EU to develop an external climate policy and to speak with one voice to maintain a leading role in the COP 15 negotiations.

In the resolution adopted by 516 votes to 92, with 70 abstentions, MEPs say the international agreement should ensure that:

- developed countries significantly reduce their emissions collectively at the high end of the 25-40 % range by 2020 and a long-term reduction target of at least 80% by 2050 compared to 1990;
- developing countries as a group limit their emission growth to 15 - 30% below “business as usual”. Non-Annex-I countries should commit themselves to different targets, according to their economic weight and impact on climate change;
- developed countries are made responsible for providing sufficient, sustainable and predictable financial and technical support to developing countries - this support for climate change mitigation and adaptation must be new and additional to Official Development Assistance; about €5-7 billion of this should be fast-start funding for the period 2010 - 2012;
- the collective contribution of the EU towards developing countries’ mitigation efforts and adaptation needs should not be less than €30 billion per year by 2020;
- both emission reduction targets and financing commitments need to be subject to a stricter compliance regime, including an early warning mechanism and penalties;
- stringent project quality standards must be part of future offsetting mechanisms, to prevent industrialised countries taking away the low-cost reduction options from developing countries and to guarantee reliable, verifiable and real emission reductions;
- international aviation and shipping should be integrated into an international agreement under the UNFCCC with the same binding targets as for other industry sectors and an auctioning of at least 50 % of the allowances should apply;
- significant support must be provided to developing countries to halt gross tropical deforestation by 2020 and a Global Forest Carbon Mechanism should be created under the UNFCCC framework.

MEPs emphasise that an agreement in Copenhagen could stimulate a ‘Sustainable New Deal’ boosting economic growth, promoting environmentally sustainable technologies, reducing energy consumption and securing new jobs in both industrialised and developing countries. All governments are urged to stimulate energy efficiency measures.

Regarding the input of other developed countries to the Copenhagen conference, MEPs urge the USA to commit itself at least to the goals set out during the US presidential election campaign, thereby sending a strong signal to other countries. They stress that it is also extremely important for India to make a contribution, they recognise Japan’s commitment to reduce its emissions by 25% in 2020 and welcome the positive signals from China in the light of these developments.

For more information as well as the full text of the EP resolution please consult: www.europarl.europa.eu/climatechange

