

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

17.9.2008

B6-0428/2008

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Questions for Oral Answer B6-0460/2008 and B6-0461/2008

pursuant to Rule 108(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by Giles Chichester and Urszula Gacek

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on getting a grip on energy prices

B6-0428

European Parliament resolution on getting a grip on energy prices

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its having regard to its resolutions on oil dependency of 29 September 2005 (P6-TA (2005)361) and on the crisis in the fisheries sector caused by rising fuel prices of 19 June 2008 (P6-TA (2008)308),
 - having regard to the Communication from the Commission on ‘Facing the challenge of higher oil prices’ (COM(2008) 384 final),
 - having regard to the Presidency conclusions of the European Council of 19-20 June 2008,
 - having regard to the agreement at the informal ECOFIN Council of 12-13 September 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in the summer oil prices reached their all-time highest level in real terms, prices of other energy products have also risen and consumer fuel prices have been following the trend of the crude oil price; whereas the weak dollar has contributed to pressure on oil prices,
- B. whereas estimates indicate that oil prices will stay high in the medium- to long-term and this will have a negative impact on inflation and the growth of the EU economy,
- C. whereas the higher price levels are undermining the purchasing power of EU citizens, with the most negative impact being on the lowest income households and energy-intensive industry sectors,
- D. whereas the hike in energy prices is influenced by a combination of complex sets of factors: structural shift of oil supply and demand; shrinking number and size of new oilfields; limited oil production expansion; geopolitical factors; less investment in technology advances; higher investment costs; lack of qualified workforce in the main producing countries,
- E. whereas the increased transparency, reliability and more frequent publication of data on commercial oil stocks are important for the efficient functioning of oil markets,
- F. whereas the current financial turmoil has pushed investors to seek alternative investments and has contributed to increased short-term price volatility;
- G. whereas the EU economy is still highly dependent on imported oil, and potential new fields are mostly in ‘unconventional deposits’, making investment costs higher for their development,

1. Expresses its concern at the increase in energy prices, notably because of its negative effect on the European economy and competitiveness, which is hampering attainment of the Lisbon Strategy objectives;
2. Underlines the necessity to take measures that will enable the EU economy to maintain its competitiveness and to adapt to the new oil price environment;
3. Calls for strong political commitment to move to a low-carbon EU economy, to promote renewables, energy efficiency and other low-carbon energy sources, and to pursue diversification of energy supply and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels, as this shift is the most logical response to higher oil prices; endorses the need for those strategic measures necessarily to be followed up by strong financial commitments in R&D;
4. Supports the European Council's decision that short-term and targeted measures should be taken in order to alleviate the negative impact on the poorest households; however, considers that measures inducing more inflation and less energy-saving incentives should be avoided as they can be a detriment to public finance sustainability and invalidated by higher prices of oil;
5. Notes with concern that consumers continue to pay higher prices not always fully reflecting downwards fluctuations in prices;
6. Calls on the Commission to intensify its efforts to improve the terms of competition in the oil sector and to ensure compliance with existing competition rules; considers that a particular focus should be placed on investigating and combating oligopolies and cartels in refining and distribution to points of consumption;
7. Considers that the EIB should have a more prominent role in providing funding for energy efficiency, renewables and R&D projects, especially with a focus on SMEs;
8. Invites the Commission to present its proposal on the Energy Tax Directive review, after carefully examining the effects that taxation measures could have on inflation, on new investments in oil production and exploration, and on the transition to the EU low-carbon economy;
9. Stresses the importance of the increased transparency and reliability of data on oil markets and oil stocks; considers it important to improve the understanding of oil product price development; calls for a timely revision of the Community legislation on emergency oil stocks;
10. Calls on the EU to improve an effective dialogue with OPEC and non-OPEC countries, aimed at greater stability of oil prices, more predictability in supplies of finished oil products and payment for oil sales in euros instead of US dollars;
11. Reiterates the importance of an EU common energy policy and security of supply, and of the European Neighbourhood Policy; believes in this respect that the EU should take the lead in the energy dialogue with key oil suppliers; welcomes the idea of a high-level summit between oil consuming and producing countries;

12. Encourages EU companies to be more proactive, namely by making further investments, and take the lead in new technology know-how and engineering skills, in order to remain key partners with the main oil producing countries;
13. Notes that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) should be improved within the major oil companies in order to channel more private investment, financed by any current windfall profits in the oil industry, into energy-saving programmes and alternative energy technologies and related R&D;
14. Invites the Member States to coordinate policy interventions in tackling oil price increases; calls on the Commission to come up with an analysis based on Member States' 'best practice' policy measures in their response to high oil price challenges;
15. Calls on the Council to push for an agreement on the next key steps towards achieving a truly liberalized Energy internal market;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.