



Copenhagen: MEPs urge EU to continue leading fight against climate change

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 funding commitments and sanctions for non-compliance.

EU government leaders must demonstrate political leadership to make a success of the summit, say MEPs in a resolution adopted on Wednesday. Future generations might not be able to control climate change if global action is further delayed.

The Copenhagen summit should at the very least result in a binding agreement on climate change mitigation targets for industrialised countries and on financing. In addition, 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, which is expected to finalise an international agreement on a framework for combating climate change for the period after 2012, 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.

"The EU has taken up a leadership position in the fight for climate protection and we want to keep it that way in Copenhagen. Therefore we need to stand by our offer: a 30% reduction of Co2 in 2020," said Environment Committee chair Jo Leinen (S&D, DE).

In a 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" but, given their economic weight, China, India and Brazil should commit themselves to targets similar to those of the industrialised countries;
- 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 tougher 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;

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- international aviation and shipping should be integrated into an international agreement with the same binding targets as for other industry sectors and an auctioning of at least 50 % of the allowances;
- 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.

Regarding the input of other developed countries to the Copenhagen conference, MEPs urge the USA to make the goals set during the election campaign binding, thereby sending a strong signal. 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% by 2020 and they welcome the positive signals from China in the light of these developments.

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