

COP 21: environment MEPs adopt mandate for Paris climate talks

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The environment committee said on Wednesday that Parliament's delegation to the COP 21 climate talks in Paris must call for a 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, a 40% energy-efficiency target and a binding 30% target for renewable energy.

In a resolution adopted by 55 votes to 5, with 8 abstentions, the committee also says a share of the EU's carbon market allowances should be earmarked for climate finance and the aviation and shipping sectors should initiate measures to curb their emissions by the end of 2016.

"The stakes are huge. We must limit the global rise in temperature to 2 degrees C if we are to curb climate change and the resulting catastrophic droughts, floods and food crises. These natural disasters are behind an exponential growth of climate refugees who could number as many as 200 million in the coming years – even more than the number of war refugees," said Gilles Pargneaux (S&D, FR), who drew up the resolution, after the vote.

In its resolution, which constitutes the mandate for the EP delegation to the COP 21 meeting in December, the committee proposes a reduction of at least 40% of greenhouse-gas emissions in the EU by 2030, and a phasing-out of global carbon emissions by 2050 or shortly thereafter.

"In this fight Europe must be the engine and the model. This is why we support a binding target of 40% energy efficiency and a binding renewable energy target of 30% of total energy consumption by 2030," said Mr Pargneaux.

The resolution calls for "a general reinvigoration of the EU's climate policy" in line with the upper limit of the EU's commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 80-95% below 1990 levels by 2050. MEPs also want EU member states to consider further commitments, over and above the agreed 2030 target.

The committee says the 2015 Protocol must be legally binding and seek to phase out global carbon emissions by 2050 or shortly thereafter in a bid to keep global warming below 2 degrees C in a cost-effective way. If this looks too ambitious, work will have to start in 2016 to devise additional reduction measures, it says. It recommends that the parties to the COP 21 conference back five-year commitment periods in order to "avoid locking into low levels of ambition".

Climate finance

The committee wants climate finance to be included in any agreement reached in Paris in a way that reflects changing environmental and economic realities. It calls on the EU and its member states to agree on a roadmap to scale up finance towards their fair share of the overall target of \$100 billion a year by 2020.

It proposes earmarking some of the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) allowances as sources of climate finance, as well as revenues from EU and international taxes on aviation and shipping emissions.

Press release

MEPs also ask the Commission to promote links between the EU's ETS and other emission trading systems with the aim of creating international carbon market mechanisms.

Transport

The committee points out that transport is the second-largest sector generating greenhouse gas emissions and calls on the parties to COP21 to work through the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on measures to cut emissions before the end of 2016.

Second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol

The resolution calls on the parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including EU member states, to complete their Kyoto Protocol ratification processes for the period up to 2020 by December 2015.

Next steps

The full House will vote on the resolution on 14 October.

Further information

- Video extracts from the vote and statement by Gilles PARGNEAUX : <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?ref=1108827>
- Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/envi/home.html>

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