



## Prince Charles in Parliament: "Doomsday clock of climate change is ticking"

Prince Charles called for the "biggest public, private and NGO partnership ever seen" to tackle climate change and halt the destruction of the world's tropical forests in a speech to MEPs on Thursday. He said any measures to tackle climate change cannot succeed "without a strong lead from Europe and its citizens". He welcomed the recent climate proposals from the European Commission and told MEPs that the "role of each and every one of you will be absolutely crucial".

Welcoming the Prince, Parliament's President Hans-Gert Pöttering vowed that MEPs "would try and hold EU members to the commitments they had made and to pass the new package of measures (such as promoting renewable energy and carbon capture), into law before the European elections in June 2009".

He paid a personal tribute to the Prince saying that "you were one of the first international opinion-leaders to draw the world's attention to the threat posed by global warming".

### "Doomsday clock of climate change is ticking"

In his address Prince Charles painted a picture of a world where climate change has taken hold. The Prince mentioned melting of the polar ice cap telling his audience that "in the last few months we have learnt that the North Polar ice cap is melting so fast that some scientists are predicting that in seven years time it will completely disappear in summer".

He told MEPs that the "doomsday clock of climate change is ticking ever faster towards midnight. We cannot be anything less than courageous and revolutionary in our approach to tackling climate change".

He mentioned the UN's panel of climate change which stated last year "that up to two billion people worldwide will face water shortages, and up to 30 per cent of plant and animal species would be put at risk of extinction, if the average rise in temperature stabilizes between 1.5 and 2.5 degrees".

### Forests are the world's "Thermostat"

He also deplored the destruction of the world's rainforests saying "they act as a natural thermostat, helping to regulate our climate. And they sustain the lives of some of the poorest people on this Earth". On the scale of the deforestation the Prince painted a shocking picture: "every year 20 million hectares – an area the size of England, Wales and Scotland combined – are destroyed or degraded".

He continued on this theme saying that “unbelievable as it might seem, we are destroying our planet's air-conditioning system. But the loss of biodiversity is also terrifying. It has been compared to burning down a library of precious knowledge without first reading the books”

### **"Biggest public, private and NGO partnership ever seen"**

The Prince was emphatic on the need for both the private and public sector to play a role in tackling climate change. "Climate change presents such a threat that, uniquely in history, it will surely require the effort of every nation and every person to find and implement a solution before it is too late? asked the Prince. He added: "It is a task that calls for the biggest public, private and NGO partnership ever seen" said the Prince.

He also mentioned the group of major European companies who had come together to support policies in the EU that would lead to a low carbon economy. He noted that before the Bali conference on climate change they had brought together 170 global companies calling for a legally binding framework on emissions which went beyond what was agreed at Bali.

The Prince finished by saying that "none of us will be forgiven by our children and grandchildren if we falter and fail".

### **MEPs enthusiastic about Princes speech**

The speech drew a standing ovation from MEPs and others in the room. As people were filing out we spoke to a couple of Members to gauge their reaction.

Mr Dan Jørgensen, a Danish Socialist MEP and vice chair of Parliament's Environment committee, said that "it was very much in line with what was decided by the EU and the Parliament on climate change". He also said "we need to set very high goals –both the public and the private sector".

Parliament's vice-president, British Conservative Mr Edward McMillan-Scott said "it was a very remarkable visit by the future King of England talking about subjects which he has been studying in detail for many years. The leadership of people like Prince Charles has been significant. I think he chose the right forum to make a speech".

***You can read and listen to the speech in full by clicking on the links below.***