



Plenary sitting

B8-0201/2019

11.3.2019

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission
pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on climate change: a European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous,
modern, competitive and climate neutral economy
(2019/2582(RSP))

Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Zdzisław Krasnodębski
on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on climate change: a European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy (2019/2582(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 28 November 2018 entitled ‘A Clean Planet for all – A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy’ (COM(2018)0773),
 - having regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol thereto,
 - having regard to the Paris Agreement, Decision 1/CP.21, to the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the UNFCCC and to the 11th Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP11), held in Paris, France from 30 November to 11 December 2015,
 - having regard to the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) to the UNFCCC, the 14th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP14), and the third part of the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA1.3), held in Katowice, Poland, from 2 to 14 December 2018,
 - having regard to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
 - having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2018 on the 2018 UN Climate Change Conference in Katowice, Poland (COP24)¹,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 22 March 2018,
 - having regard to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report entitled ‘Global Warming of 1.5°C’, its fifth assessment report (AR5) and its synthesis report,
 - having regard to the ninth edition of the UN Environment Emissions Gap Report, adopted on 27 November 2018,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas COP24 in Katowice resulted in the adoption of the Katowice Rulebook, which provides legal clarity in implementing the Paris Agreement;
- B. whereas three years after the historic conclusion of the Paris Agreement, the French

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0430.

capital witnessed severe social unrest linked to climate policy; whereas this proves that social provisions are essential in order to limit any negative economic consequences from climate legislation; whereas the Katowice Rulebook is an attempt to build a climate policy that leaves nobody behind;

- C. whereas the EU is responsible for less than 10 % of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and cannot achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement alone; whereas only global action involving the largest economies in the world can bring about fulfilment of these goals;
 - D. whereas the Paris Agreement was only possible when the parties dispensed with the concept of full de-carbonisation, and instead promoted a balance between emissions and sinks (net-zero emissions);
 - E. whereas the EU long-term strategy for GHG reduction should always be accompanied by a strategy to help heavily affected regions, in particular coal mining regions, to undergo a just transition that would help these regions maintain employment and gain public support for climate policy;
 - F. whereas the EU's long-term policy on GHG emission reductions should take into account the different infrastructure capacities of Member States;
1. Highlights that European citizens already face direct impacts of climate change; underlines that, according to the European Environment Agency, average annual losses caused by weather and climate-related extremes in the Union amounted to around EUR 12.8 billion between 2010 and 2016;
 2. Notes that, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, limiting global warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot would require rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems at an unprecedented scale and would require a deep reduction in emissions in all sectors, a wide portfolio of mitigation options and a significant upscaling of investments in those options;
 3. Notes the UN Environment's 2018 Emissions Gap Report, which finds that current unconditional nationally determined contributions (NDCs) far surpass the Paris Agreement warming limit of well below 2°C and will instead result in an estimated 3.2°C² temperature increase by 2100; stresses the urgent need for all Parties to the UNFCCC to increase their climate commitments in due course;
 4. Takes note of the Commission communication on the long-term strategy entitled 'A Clean Planet for all – A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy', which underlines the opportunities and challenges that the transformation towards a net-zero greenhouse gas economy brings to European citizens and Europe's economy, and sets the basis for a wide debate involving EU institutions, national parliaments, the business sector, non-governmental

² UN Environment Programme, 'Emissions Gap Report 2018', p.10.

organisations, cities and communities, as well as citizens; asks the Council to agree on a cost-effective pathway towards reaching a balance between emissions and sinks in accordance with the Paris Agreement, taking into account the different capacities of the Member States;

Pathways for the European mid-century zero emissions strategy

5. Notes that the long-term strategy presents eight pathways for the economic, technological and social transformation needed for the Union to comply with the long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement; underlines that two of them would enable the Union to reach net-zero GHG emissions by 2050; highlights that this requires swift action and considerable efforts on all levels, from local and regional to national and European, and the involvement of all non-public actors; recognises that regionally and locally determined contributions could be important tools in bridging the emissions gap; recalls the obligation of Member States to adopt national long-term strategies as laid down in the Governance Regulation³ which should guide EU action; underlines the role of a technology neutral approach in delivering GHG reduction in accordance with the Paris Agreement;
6. Recalls that, according to the Commission's estimates, the EU's GDP is expected to increase more under zero-emissions scenarios than in scenarios with lower emission reductions, with the effects in both cases being spread unevenly across the EU as a result of differences among Member States, inter alia in terms of GDP per capita and the carbon intensity of different national energy mixes;
7. Notes with concern that the EU's energy import dependence currently stands at around 55 %; highlights that under a net-zero emissions scenario this would fall to 20 % by 2050, which would have a positive impact on the EU's trade balance and geopolitical position;
8. Notes that pathways to reach net-zero emissions include the use of a number of carbon removal technologies, including through carbon capture utilisation and storage, and direct air capture, that have yet to be deployed on a large scale; considers, however, that the EU's net-zero strategy should prioritise direct emission reduction and actions conserving and enhancing the EU's natural sinks and reservoirs, and should only aim for the use of carbon removal technologies where no direct emission reduction options are available;
9. Stresses that until the feasibility of those technologies is proven, any pathway towards 2050 or beyond into the second half of the century should be based on the commercial availability of key transition technologies, while taking into account different starting points among Member States by supporting just transition in the most carbon-intensive

³ Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, amending Regulations (EC) No 663/2009 and (EC) No 715/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Directives 94/22/EC, 98/70/EC, 2009/31/EC, 2009/73/EC, 2010/31/EU, 2012/27/EU and 2013/30/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Directives 2009/119/EC and (EU) 2015/652 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, p. 1).

regions and reducing emissions in all emitting sectors;

Social aspects of climate change and just transition

10. Welcomes the Commission's assertion that net-zero emissions are possible without net job losses and takes positive note of the detailed assessment of the transition in energy-intensive industries; highlights that, if handled well with the appropriate support for the most vulnerable regions, sectors and citizens, a just transition towards net-zero GHG emissions has the potential to create a net gain of jobs in the Union; considers, therefore, that the Commission should develop a renewed skills audit under the EU Skills Panorama, with regional data on the skills needs for a climate neutral Europe to support the most vulnerable regions, sectors and people in re-skilling for future-proof, high-quality jobs in these same regions;
11. Highlights that the transition needs to be just for all parts of society; notes that this requires an understanding of just transition that incorporates negative and positive impacts associated with accelerated climate action, such as job losses and new employment opportunities;
12. Believes that Europe's climate transition must be ecologically, economically and socially sustainable; stresses that, in order to ensure political acceptance by all citizens, it is important to take into account the distributional effects of climate-related and decarbonisation policies, specifically on people with low income; considers, therefore, that social impacts should be taken into full consideration in all EU and national climate policies with a view to ensuring a social and ecological transformation in Europe;
13. Reiterates that a certain level of flexibility in achieving a climate neutral economy would mitigate social costs, in particular in coal-dependent regions and would contribute to their transformation;
14. Recalls that approximately 50 to 125 million European citizens are currently at risk of energy poverty⁴; highlights that the energy transition can have a disproportionate effect on people with low incomes and further increase energy poverty; recognises that energy policy must incorporate the social dimension and ensure that no one is left behind; calls on the Member States to take forward-looking action to ensure a just energy transition and access to energy for all EU citizens;
15. Emphasises that the inclusion and participation of European citizens is vital to enable Europe to reach net-zero GHG emissions; encourages all levels of national, regional and local government to put in place concrete measures stimulating and facilitating the participation of citizens in the transition to a decarbonised society;

Sectoral contribution

16. Emphasises that net emissions will eventually have to be reduced to close to zero in all sectors of the economy, which should all contribute in the joint efforts to reduce emissions; calls on the Commission therefore to develop pathways to climate neutrality

⁴[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/563472/IPOL_STU\(2015\)563472_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/563472/IPOL_STU(2015)563472_EN.pdf)

for all sectors;

17. Points out, however, that achieving a net-zero greenhouse gas economy will require considerable additional investments in the EU's energy system and related infrastructure compared to today's baseline, in the range of EUR 175 to 290 billion a year;
18. Stresses that there are different ways to reach a climate neutral economy and believes that Member States should be able to choose their own transition pathways towards a reduction in GHG emissions based on their strategic energy and climate plans;
19. Highlights the role of energy-intensive industries in achieving long-term EU GHG reductions; considers that maintaining the EU's low-carbon industrial leadership and industrial production in the EU, preserving the competitiveness of European industries and preventing the risk of carbon leakage necessitate intelligent and targeted policy frameworks; calls on the Commission to present a new and integrated EU industrial climate strategy for energy-intensive industries in support of a competitive net-zero-emission heavy industry transition;
20. Calls on the Commission to develop an industrial strategy with measures that allow European industry to compete globally on a level playing field; considers that as part of this policy, the Commission should examine the effectiveness, and compatibility with World Trade Organisation rules, of additional measures to protect industries at risk of carbon leakage in respect of the importation of products, which would replace, adapt or complement any existing measures on carbon leakage;
21. Stresses, in view of the different starting points of the energy transition, that efforts to reduce greenhouse gases with a view to achieving climate neutrality at EU level may be spread unevenly across the EU;
22. Calls on the Member States to implement the Clean Energy Package without delay; recalls the Member States' competence to decide on their energy mix within the EU climate and energy framework;
23. Notes that the Commission's 2018 report on energy prices and costs in Europe⁵ highlights the ongoing high exposure of the EU to volatile and rising fossil fuel prices and that future electricity production costs are expected to increase for fossil fuel-generated electricity and fall for renewables; stresses that EU energy import costs increased by 26 % in 2017 to EUR 266 billion, mainly due to increasing oil prices; notes that the report estimates that oil price increases have had a negative impact on EU growth (-0.4 % GDP in 2017) and on inflation (+0.6);
24. Recalls that 71 % of all energy is used for space heating alone; agrees with the Commission that energy-efficient homes will become standard in a climate neutral EU, delivering better health and comfort for all Europeans;
25. Highlights the central role of renewable energy sources and other low-emission energy

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1548155579433&uri=CELEX:52019DC0001>

sources in the transition towards a net-zero GHG economy, as energy is currently responsible for 75 % of Europe's GHG emissions;

26. Calls for a highly energy efficient energy system that is based on low-emission sources that do not jeopardise energy security; asks the Commission and the Member States to take all necessary action in that regard as it will have spill-over effects across all economic sectors;
27. Acknowledges the role attributed to climate capture and storage (CCS) in most 1.5°C scenarios in the IPCC 1.5°C special report; stresses the need for the EU to pursue greater ambition in this area; further notes the targets set by Member States under the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET Plan) to implement commercial-scale CCS in the European energy and industrial sector in the 2020s; considers it necessary to increase the use in industrial processes of environmentally safe carbon capture and utilisation (CCU) and CCS, delivering a net reduction in emissions through emission avoidance or permanent storage of CO₂;
28. Points out that electrification of the building, industry and transport sectors will play a key role in reducing the emissions of these sectors and will require a reliable future supply of electricity and an improved storage capacity;
29. Underlines the importance of ensuring a modal shift from air to rail travel, and towards public transport and shared mobility; notes that road transport contributes about one fifth of the EU's total emissions of carbon dioxide; calls on the Member States and the Commission, therefore, to take decisive steps to enable access to zero-and low-emission vehicles for consumers in all Member States, while avoiding an increased uptake of old, highly polluting vehicles in low-income Member States; further underlines the role of smart technologies, such as smart charging infrastructure, to establish synergies between the electrification of transport and the deployment of renewable energy sources;
30. Underlines that the EU should promote the role and efforts of regions, cities and towns; calls on the Commission to build on the work of EU Covenant of Mayors, representing 200 million European citizens, and enable them to play a catalysing role for further transition;

Maximising the climate potential of forests in the context of a sustainable bioeconomy

31. Supports active and sustainable forest management at national level, together with concrete means to incentivise an efficient and sustainable EU bioeconomy, given the considerable potential of forests to contribute to the strengthening of Europe's climate efforts (through sequestration, storage and substitution) and the achievement of the target of zero emissions by 2050 at the latest; recognises the need for climate change adaptation and the need to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems services in the EU by 2020; stresses the need to develop evidence-based policies that help implement and finance EU biodiversity conservation measures;
32. Highlights the need to make sustainable forest management more commercially competitive and to support practical measures with significant storage and sequestration effects, such as using timber as building material in both cities and rural areas, as a

replacement for fossil fuels and as a tool for better water retention;

33. Recommends that significant effort be focused on agroforestry and the very real gains to be made – ecologically and in biodiversity – through the incorporation of trees and various vegetation into working farmland;
34. Recognises the positive potential for afforestation in Europe; believes, that afforestation initiatives must be complemented by concrete initiatives and incentives aiming to enhance sequestration potential, while ensuring and enhancing the health of existing forest lands in order to reap the benefits for the climate, the sustainable bioeconomy and biodiversity; supports, therefore, the afforestation of abandoned and marginally productive agricultural land, agroforestry and the minimisation of the conversion of forest areas to other land uses;

Financing and research

35. Calls for rapid implementation of the EU emissions trading system (ETS) Innovation Fund and for the start of the first call for proposals in 2019, in order to boost investments in the demonstration of low-carbon industrial breakthrough technologies in a wide array of sectors, not only electricity production, but also district heating and industrial processes; calls for the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework and its programmes to be fully consistent with the Paris Agreement;
36. Considers that in order for the Union to reach net-zero emissions, substantial private investments need to be mobilised; believes that this will require long-term planning and regulatory stability and predictability for investors and, accordingly, due consideration in future EU regulations;
37. Stresses the importance of creating a just transition fund, especially for the regions most affected by decarbonisation, particularly coal mining regions, combined with a general consideration of social impacts in existing climate funding; highlights, in this regard, the need for wide public acceptance of the long-term strategy, given the transformations needed in some sectors;
38. Stresses that geographical balance in the distribution of support from research and innovation programmes among Member States is key for their effective contribution towards a climate neutral economy;

The role of consumers and the circular economy

39. Stresses the importance of the EU achieving not only energy substitution but also product/material substitution, i.e. substituting products and materials that are fossil-based or that create high emissions during production with products based on renewable resources;
40. Underlines that a very large part of energy use, and therefore GHG emissions, is tied directly to the acquisition, processing, transport, conversion, use and disposal of resources; stresses that very significant savings are possible at each stage in the resource management chain; highlights, therefore, that increasing resource productivity through improved efficiency and reducing resource waste through measures such as reuse,

recycling and remanufacturing can significantly lower both resource consumption and GHG emissions while improving competitiveness and creating business opportunities and jobs; highlights the cost efficiency of circular economy measures; underlines that improved resource efficiency and circular economy approaches, as well as circular product design, will help to bring about a shift in production and consumption patterns and reduce the amount of waste;

41. Stresses the importance of product policy, such as green public procurement and ecodesign, which can make a significant contribution to energy savings and to reducing the carbon footprint of products, while at the same time improving the footprint of the materials used and the overall environmental impact; highlights the need to establish circular economy requirements as part of EU ecodesign standards and to expand the current ecodesign methodology to other product categories in addition to energy-related products;
42. Notes that the success of the transition towards a climate neutral Europe will depend on the participation and commitment of citizens, which can be facilitated by energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy or by nearby renewable technologies;
43. Considers that the work on a reliable model for measuring the climate impact based on consumption should be continued; takes note of the fact that, on the basis of the existing models, the in-depth analysis concludes that the EU's efforts to reduce the emissions of its production are somehow levelled off by the imports of goods with a higher carbon footprint;

The EU and global climate action

44. Underlines the importance of increased initiatives and sustained dialogue in relevant international fora, and of effective climate diplomacy with the aim of spurring on similar policy decisions that ramp up climate ambition in other regions and third countries, as only global action can make a difference in reducing GHG emissions worldwide;
45. Regrets the fact that many other major economies are not yet working on long-term strategies and that there is almost no debate in other major economies about increasing the NDCs to bring them into line with the global target under the Paris Agreement; asks the Council and the Commission, therefore, to increase climate diplomacy and to take other appropriate measures to encourage other major economies, so that together we can achieve the long-term Paris Agreement targets;
46. Highlights the merit of strengthening interoperability between EU policy instruments and third country equivalents, notably carbon pricing mechanisms; calls on the Commission to continue and intensify cooperation and support in the development of carbon pricing mechanisms outside Europe in order to pursue increased emission reductions and an improved level playing field worldwide; underlines the importance of establishing environmental safeguards to ensure an actual and additional reduction in greenhouse gases; calls on the Commission therefore to advocate for strict and robust international rules relating to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement to prevent loopholes in accounting or double counting of emission reductions;

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47. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.