

## **SECURE EU LEADERSHIP IN COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE**

### Introduction

Climate change from global warming pollutants such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) presents a key challenge to global sustainable development. If emissions of global warming gases continue to increase by about 1-2% per year, many valuable ecosystems will suffer, such as the Arctic, Nordic and tropical forests, tropical coral reefs and mangroves. Indeed these impacts are already being observed. For instance, there has been a dramatic decline in Arctic ice cover in recent decades. At the same time, poorer and more exposed communities across the globe will face increased weather extremes such as hurricanes, flooding, drought and heatwaves. Such changing weather patterns can severely affect food security, as well as health and living conditions. If climate change is not tackled effectively, low-lying island nations in the Pacific and the Caribbean may entirely disappear because of rising sea levels.

So far, the EU has taken the lead among industrialised nations in pushing for commitments and targets under the Kyoto protocol, which binds the EU to a reduction in global warming gases of about 8% below the level of 1990 by 2012. But this target is not enough! International scientists have stated that radical CO<sub>2</sub> emissions cuts must be agreed in the future in order to ensure that the climate change problem does not become worse and damage from weather-related disasters is limited. In order to avoid a major disaster, a long-term limit on global warming of 2 degree Celsius over pre-industrial times must be agreed. Currently the increase is approaching 1 degree Celsius.

Energy consumption in the EU is growing at a rate of 1% a year. Major changes are therefore needed to reach long-term CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions of about 30% by 2020<sup>1</sup> and 60-80% by the middle of this century. Reductions of this scale are necessary in order to limit global temperatures below 2 degree Celsius.

### THE NEXT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SHOULD:

1. Strongly support a long-term, ecologically sound, fair and equitable climate change agreement that goes well beyond the present 2012 deadline, within the framework of respecting a long-term limit on global warming of below a 2 degree Celsius warming over pre-industrial times.
2. Ensure that any new legislation in the field of energy, transport and climate change helps the EU to achieve its present Kyoto commitment and introduces timetables for further reductions beyond 2020.
3. Insist on an increase in the use of clean renewable energy sources to 25% of overall energy consumption by 2020.
4. Insist on a goal of a 1% annual decrease of overall energy consumption.
5. Insist that the EU fulfills its commitments to assist developing countries, in particular the poorest, to adapt to the impacts of climate change and sustainable development. Funds pledged to these ends under the UNFCCC and in Bonn at COP6 bis must be clearly additional.
6. Resist the abuse of climate change for the promotion of nuclear energy.

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<sup>1</sup> Germany has proposed a target of 30% CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions below 1990 levels by 2020 for the EU. This is in line with the long-term goals if we assume moderate climate sensitivity. More might be required.

**What important decisions have been taken at EU level in the past, where the EP made a difference?**

- Directive on the promotion of electricity produced from renewable energy ([Directive 2001/77/EC](#)).
- Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 2003 establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community and amending Council Directive 96/61/EC
- Proposal for a Directive amending the Directive establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community, in respect of the Kyoto Protocol's project mechanisms - COM (2003)403
- The Commission's regulation (2003/0189) on fluorinated greenhouse gases.

**What could have been better with a stronger pro-environmental vote in the Parliament?**

- Linking Directive – if the Parliament had approved entity-level caps this would have greatly improved the chances of protecting supplementarity.
- Emission trading – if the Parliament had successfully insisted on set targets for the Member States we would not now be facing such weak national allocation plans.
- (if possible to be added by EEB members) the relevance of the issue at national level.

**What is in the pipeline for the months after the elections?**

1. Framework Directive on Eco-Design of Energy Using Equipment
2. Energy end-use efficiency and energy services Directive
3. Security of Supply Directive
4. Long-term commitments to tackle climate change

**Questions that candidates could be asked to get to know their positions and level of commitment**

Ask for their positions on the above pieces of legislation.

If you were elected MEP, would you support the aim

- to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the EU by 30% by the year 2020 and by 80% by 2050 compared to the 1990 level?
- to reduce the EU energy consumption by annually 1%?
- to increase the share of renewable energies in the EU to reach 25% by 2020?