

Resolution on the UN Climate Change Negotiations in Copenhagen

Having regard to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to tackling climate change and the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997;

Having regard to the findings of the fourth assessment report of the International Panel on Climate Change;

Having regard to the Climate and Energy Package adopted by the European Parliament and the Council the main aim of which is among others to slash greenhouse gas emissions and boost renewable energy sources by at least 20% by 2020;

Having regard to the recent adoption of the American Clean Energy and Security Bill which aims a significant shift in the United States' climate change policy and is under negotiation in the US Senate;

Having regard to the ambition of Australia to set up a cap-and-trade system and the continuous world-wide growth on voluntary carbon markets;

Having regard to the pledge of the G8 leaders in July 2009 to cut CO2 emissions by 50% by 2050;

Having regard to the upcoming UNFCCC talks in Copenhagen that will possibly result in the adoption of a new international climate change framework for the post-Kyoto era;

Whereas, the change of climate is a scientific fact and it is very likely that human activity largely contributes to it;

Whereas the extent of human contribution to climate change still cannot be accurately determined by scientific researches;

Whereas adaptation and mitigation efforts are simultaneously needed to tackle the negative effects of climate change. However, taking into account the elements of scientific uncertainties is also a necessity;

Whereas climate change has considerable economic and social effects (costs and damages) many EU regions are particularly exposed to and influences all economic sectors and actors and urgent steps are needed. However it cannot be regarded as a synonym for inevitable Armageddon as projected by some panic-triggering statements;

Whereas industrialized and developing countries take a common but differentiated responsibility concerning the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere;

Whereas the absence of engagement of the emerging economies, like Brazil, China, India, Russia, ... endangers the 25-40% GHG-reduction target by 2020 that the IPCC says is necessary to limit global warming below the critical 2°C threshold;

Whereas without significant financial support from industrialized nations, developing countries might not be able to fulfill ambitious commitments;

Whereas the European Union has already demonstrated its commitment by adopting a climate and energy package. Reaching the EU's climate goals would also assist Europe to ease its energy import dependence;

Whereas due to the expiration of the Kyoto Protocol in the end of 2012 there is an urgent need for a more ambitious legal framework for international climate policy;

Whereas the Poznan round of post-Kyoto negotiations resulted in agreements concerning major guidelines of forest protection and setting up an international climate fund, the 192 countries concerned are still far from reaching a compromise regarding mandatory reduction targets and the exact means of financial aid for the developing world;

Bearing all these in mind the Youth of the European People's Party

1. Is of the opinion that reaching a long-term climate agreement in Copenhagen is a crucial political priority. Copenhagen is a venue for translating long-term climate policy targets into actionable near-term climate strategies;
2. Notes that regarding the future mandatory GHG-reductions it is advisable to follow a gradually increasing reduction track instead of a linear emission-cut. With time passing by, as a consequence of technical progress, the costs of emission-reduction will be expected to be lower than the current level. Secondly, the level of critical global emission will be more accurately assessed;
3. Shares the view that non EU-member industrialized nations must adopt comparable reduction targets like the ones laid down in the EU's climate and energy package. At the same time developing countries and emerging economies are expected to adopt reasonable reduction targets that are in line with the foreseeable growth of their economies. Reduction targets must be feasible and accountable and should have an overall threshold value binding to all parties that is non expandable by flexible mechanisms or alternative growth scenarios;
4. Regards it important that the more ambitious targets will be set in Copenhagen the more it is crucial that burdens are distributed in a fair manner. In addition to the state of economic development, natural resources, climate patterns and past reduction achievements also must be taken into account while setting the mandatory reduction targets for states;

5. Urges developed countries to come up with a detailed plan during the Copenhagen summit at the latest regarding the financial support of the developing countries. At the same time emerging economies and developing countries are urged to elaborate on national climate policy strategies that is to be reflected in the climate agreement text. The European Union must find in cooperation with developing countries appropriate ways to invest this financial support in responsible projects and evaluate this accordingly.
6. Notes that flexibility must remain one of the major features of the post-Kyoto regime. International offsets, project based mechanisms are expected to enable countries to adopt more ambitious targets. Emission allowances must be tradable in the long-term making carbon markets more efficient;
7. Reckons that the implementation and validity of international offset mechanisms should undergo a thorough verification process by international and national authorities;
8. Proposes to consider the introduction a new regime of sanctions in the post-Kyoto agreement in order to ensure the fulfillment of commitments;
9. Notes that while implementing reduction measures governments should primarily focus on market-based instruments, such as cap-and-trade system, carbon tax and white certificates with proper attention to the market security mechanisms. Market-based instruments make it possible that mandatory targets are met at the lowest possible social cost;
10. Finds it essential that a common carbon emission market be established in OECD countries by 2015. Cap-and-trade systems as market-based mechanisms are valuable in terms of internalizing the costs of GHG-emissions;
11. Calls on EU member states to conduct a thorough assessment regarding the possibilities of the introduction of guidelines on national carbon taxes in line with the priorities of the Swedish EU presidency;
12. Promotes the inclusion of sustainable forest management in the post-Kyoto legal framework. Emission credits earned from forestation and aviation might be included in future cap-and-trade systems as well. However forest management must not endanger natural eco-systems;
13. Calls on the EU and its member states to adopt measures to mitigate the negative effects of a possible carbon leakage. The competitiveness of European economy must not be a victim of the post-Kyoto climate regime;
14. Finds it crucial that international trade regulations be adjusted to the post-Kyoto agreement. Trade and custom regulations once accorded with international climate policy might be valuable tools so that no country chose to opt out the post-Kyoto system;
15. Shares the view that beyond setting mandatory reduction targets an international energy efficiency agreement should also contribute to climate change mitigation efforts. The extension of well-functioning energy labeling agreements might be useful in this regard;

16. Is of the opinion that while promoting GHG-reductions it is advisable to focus on measures that have many more collateral benefits. Energy efficiency programs or the rationalization of transport and waste-management might have numerous positive effects beyond reducing GHG-emissions;
17. Is convinced that the current global economic crisis must not mean a barrier for an agreement in Copenhagen. On the contrary, a balanced and fair deal may lead to a new era of economic growth based on low-carbon technology investments;
18. Is convinced that reaching a climate change agreement in Copenhagen, along with appropriate EU legislation and proper volumes of investment into research and development, might ensure that Europe will have a leading role in the green industry.

Adopted by the YEPP Council in The Hague, 5 September 2009