

Energy and climate change

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Barcelona, Catalonia on 19th and 20th November 2009:

Notes that:

The EU is responsible for approximately 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions covered by the UNFCCC. There are many analyses that show that it does not cost much to limit the effects from climate change. The investments needed to keep the level of greenhouse gases at 450 ppm have been estimated to cost only about 0.5 per cent of global GDP over the period 2013-2030. This corresponds to a fall in global GDP growth by 0.19 per cent per year up to 2030. According to the “Stern Report”, a business as usual scenario may result in losses of about 15 per cent of global consumption in the future, due to damage to social and economic systems from climate change impacts. It is obvious that it is economically better for Europe and the rest of the world to act now rather than to wait.

Believes that:

Europe and the world need to develop a new sustainable economy, based on clean, renewable energy and the efficient use of energy and resources and reduced dependence on fossil fuels, to drive economic recovery, create jobs and help secure Europe’s future energy supplies;

There is no need to choose between caring for the environment and promoting economic growth. They are deeply dependent on each other and mutually reinforcing;

Meeting the challenges simultaneously may create new business opportunities, markets and jobs and be a forceful engine for sustainable growth and competitiveness. There is an urgent need to shift to an eco-efficient economy that generates more wealth and new, sustainable, jobs whilst reducing consumption of natural resources and the impact on the environment;

Many European sectors such as renewable electricity and sustainable transport offer good examples on how an eco-efficient economy can function. Sustainable cities and energy efficiency are cross-cutting examples. In mature sectors, heating, iron and steel, chemicals and automotives may inspire. The eco-efficient economy is not only about eco-innovation. Mature sectors must also be included as they have very critical roles for employment and the economy and for resolving environmental problems.

Resolution:

Energy and climate change

Year and Congress:

November 2009,
Barcelona

Category:

Environment and
Energy

Page:

1

There is scientific consensus, established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), that the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, as a result of human impact, is causing global temperatures to rise.

Any new global framework for mitigating and adapting to climate change must be effective, just and comprehensive, with industrial countries taking responsibility for their historic emissions;

To make sure that the world will not lose control over climate change it is necessary to decrease global greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 per cent by the year 2050, compared to 1990. According to the IPCC this would limit the increase in temperature to between 2 and 2.4°C, compared with pre-industrial times.

History shows that countries can move quickly together and that international cooperation is central to create incentives for mitigation action. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol are establishments that have made the biggest achievements so far.

When the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012 it will become necessary to find a new global agreement. That is why the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen 7-18 December 2009 is so crucial. It is more or less the last chance to come to an agreement before 2012.

Any new international agreements must be based on the best scientific evidence, which indicates that climate change is happening faster and more aggressively than previously estimated; and that to avoid catastrophic climate change, average global temperature needs to increase by no more than 2°C;

Responsibility for the delivery of international targets must come at local, regional and national levels, and the developed countries must set an example in tackling climate change by setting their emissions reduction target for 2020 at 40% below 1990 levels.

The active participation and commitment of Brazil, China, India and the USA are crucial to any successful agreement of a replacement for the Kyoto Protocol at this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen;

Calls for:

- An ambitious global agreement at Copenhagen including all the countries in the world;

Resolution:

Energy and climate change

Year and Congress:

November 2009,
Barcelona

Category:

Environment and Energy

Page:

2

- The transition of European industries and economies into an eco-efficient economy;
- The introduction of a European price on carbon emissions and setting common minimum levels of taxation of carbon emissions based upon that;
- The creation of a global carbon market that includes a larger number of countries, markets and sectors as a flexible and cost effective tool to reduce carbon emissions;
- Compliance and support of the European Council Conclusions regarding climate change and the transformation of Europe to a low carbon economy – based not least on the Stern Report’s findings – which instruct the Council to follow a cost-effective and flexible way of attaining energy and climate policy objectives;
- Fast growing countries, such as China and Brazil, to agree on binding targets reducing their emissions to an extent that differs from a business-as-usual scenario by up to 30 per cent, compared to 1990;
- International climate investments to contribute to technical and financial transfer which are central in a new climate agreement and for sustainable development;
- The addition of biodiversity as part of a future climate agreement;
- The creation of incentives to reduce deforestation in developing countries.

In this respect calls also for a global agreement in Copenhagen to:

- Ensure commitments corresponding to an outcome where global average temperature will only increase by a maximum of 2°C, compared to pre-industrial times;
- Ensure that greenhouse gas emissions peak no later than 2015.
- Commit developed countries to reduce their emissions by 25-40 per cent of their greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, compared to 1990 and to phase out fossil fuel and industrial greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 with at least 75% of these cuts being achieved domestically
- Ensure that the longer term objective for developed countries must be to achieve a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of 80-95 % by 2050;
- Include the possibility of adjusting reduction targets in a future agreement, based on the best scientific data;

Resolution:

Energy and climate change

Year and Congress:

November 2009,
Barcelona

Category:

Environment and Energy

Page:

3

- In addition to exiting funds for overseas development, commit developed countries to contribute at least 110 billion euros each year for the period 2013 – 2017 to assist with mitigation and adoption measures in developing countries and to ensure that these funds are invested in green solutions in developing countries in accordance with the principles of the transparency and efficiency;
- Establish all its funds and mechanisms as the responsibility of the United Nations, to be run in an open and transparent manner with an equitable decision-making process between developed and developing countries.
- Expand the global carbon trading system to include a larger number of countries, markets and sectors;
- Ensure the auctioning off of tradable carbon permits instead of “grandfathering” them;

Calls further for the implementation of the following policy instruments:

- A Leapfrog Fund to facilitate the development of low-carbon technologies, energy efficiency and renewable energy in developing countries, together with the reform of patent rules;
- A United Nations Adaptation Fund to provide grants for communities vulnerable to the impact of climate change without increasing the burden on indebted countries;
- A multilateral insurance mechanism available for developing countries which implement risk reduction under the Adaptation Fund, designed to cover climate-related risks or disaster losses;
- A fund to prevent deforestation and promote biodiversity, fully respecting the rights of local and indigenous peoples and consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Calls for action at EU level, including:

- Incisive political leadership in the global negotiations by the EU institutions;
- The ALDE Group and ELDR Party galvanising European and national parliamentarians to raise public awareness of the critical importance of the Copenhagen outcome;
- Emphasizing the post-Lisbon 2010 EU strategy on growth and employment on how to achieve the transition to an eco-efficient economy.

Resolution:

Energy and climate change

Year and Congress:

November 2009,
Barcelona

Category:

Environment and Energy

Page:

4

- EU targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency beyond 2020, including specific targets for 2030 and 2050, to be set within the next five years;
- Reducing the EU's greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2020, compared with year 1990, regardless of the outcome from the Copenhagen Climate Conference;
- A binding EU target for energy efficiency by 2020, and approval by the European Parliament and the Council of the political agreement reached on the recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive;
- Reforming the EU budget so that it lays more weight on competitiveness and environment and reallocating available resources into areas such as research, innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Replacing the vast amount of directives and other legal documents in the environmental field with a Common Environmental Policy (CEP);
- An end to public money going into unconventional fuels such as tar sands.
- Development of a functioning EU energy market where economies of scale supplemented by microgeneration, carbon reduction, cost efficiencies and fair competition improve the security of energy supply and reduce costs for consumers;
- Development of a European supergrid to be fed by solar energy from North Africa and Southern Europe, wind energy from Northern and Western Europe, wave and tidal energy from coastal areas and other renewable sources;
- A European Emissions Performance Standard to ensure that new coal-fired power generation plants must use carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology to capture all CO₂ emissions from day one of operation, with a CCS regime phased in for all industrial emissions.

Resolution:

Energy and climate change

Year and Congress:

November 2009,
Barcelona

Category:

Environment and Energy

Page:

5