

XIVth ELDR CONGRESS, POITIERS. 6th-7th JUNE 1991

THE LEAD FOR EUROPE - POLICIES FOR A EUROPEAN UNION

**RESOLUTION: "ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FOR THE FUTURE"**

FINAL ADOPTED TEXT

The XIVth Congress of the ELDR Federation, meeting in Poitiers, France on June 6-7th, 1991

Recalling:

- the belief, as expressed in our 1989 European Election Manifesto that "For us, environmental and economic policy cannot be in conflict, because in the long term they are identical. For the economy of industrialized countries environmental protection can stimulate innovation and the more rational use of scarce resources";

- the urgency resolution on the Environment of the Shannon Congress 1990;

Having received the report of the Working Group on the Environment;

Congratulates the Working Party on having conducted a thorough review of environmental problems and;

Notes with interest their positive proposals.

This Congress is convinced that:

- the problems caused by environmental pollution and the misuse of the earth's non-renewable resources grow daily;

- the phenomenon of Global Warming is a real threat to present climatic and weather patterns and raises the strong possibility of consequential changes in patterns of agricultural production;

- the Gulf war has vividly demonstrated the danger to security and the world economy of over-reliance on, and profligate consumption of oil, as the major source of energy and that this has allowed it to be used as a "weapon", giving rise to environmental terrorism;

- agricultural over-production in the temperate regions of the world is caused to a large degree by the over use and misuse of the oil-based inputs to production; in the EC over-production results mainly from a one-sided agricultural policy which stimulates intensive production through output-orientated subsidies, putting agriculture into conflict with

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environmental policy, causing damage to the environment and to Third World economies through the dumping of subsidised surpluses;

- biological species are an important resource in their own right, are part of our heritage and possess rights of their own which should be protected;
- every citizen has an individual right to clean living circumstances of a high quality. This right has to be transformed in general objectives which the quality of the environment must fulfill in the coming decades.

Believing that:

- a positive approach, using fiscal incentives and market forces, to the question of lessening pollution and better use and management of resources is more effective than bureaucratic command and control;
- the market economy can make use of the principles of ecology with advantage and that the development of environmental policy can similarly benefit from the principals of the market, particularly if environmental costs are internalised;
- the sustainable economic growth the world now needs can best be founded in the conservative use and better management of all resources;
- many of the problems of waste disposal could be solved by encouraging recycling of wastes f regarding them as the raw material for new and profitable economic activities;
- tradeable emission rights are a less bureaucratic, more efficient means of effluent control and also clearly show the costs of disposal;
- a more responsible and imaginative approach to environmental problems can also help to achieve greater security in the world through lessening the pressure on scarce resources;
- many of these actions to protect and enhance the environment can only be taken effectively at Community and international levels;
- implementation of an economic policy which takes the environment into account, must involve taxation, the price-formation mechanism, incentives and eco-labelling.

Calls on the Community to establish a Common Environmental Policy which:

**1 . for energy:**

- internalises the costs of environmental protection within a future-oriented energy policy;

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- leads to a more efficient use of energy;
- introduces a climate protection tax in all EC member countries;
- sets differential rates of VAT for products (such as heaters) and actions (such as home insulation) which conserve energy;
- allocates additional EC funding for Research and Development of renewable energy sources.

## **2. for transport:**

- seeks to achieve better integration of different transport systems;
- ensures that all new infrastructure schemes clearly show the cost to the community of the effects of noise, vibration, pollution and accident risk;
- encourages investment in comprehensive and efficient networks of public transport, including rapid transit systems in all major conurbations;
- ensures that, through taxation, fuel prices reflect the environmental impact of fuel use, for example by levying a differentiated tax on the output of pollutants;
- seeks to achieve liberalisation of road transport so as to diminish environmental pollution;
- takes action to tackle traffic congestion, including in particular the development of various forms of road pricing, and peak-hour bans on private car entry into city centres, as options for local authorities;
- takes account of the environmental costs in the transport sector in order to promote a more rational repartition between the different modes of transport, notably between road and rail;
- encourages by fiscal means the development of all forms of private common transport.

## **3. for agriculture**

- encourages by fiscal and other means the extensification of production and more environmentally responsible and economically efficient use of the inputs to production, including the redirection of a proportion of the expenditure currently devoted to the Common Agricultural Policy to direct support aimed at environmental goals;
- makes the establishment of more natural mineral balance in the soil a prime objective of agricultural activities;
- encourages the use of pesticides that can be decomposed;

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- encourages markets for organic and reduced-input foodstuffs, in part by the development of consistent Community-wide labelling regulations;
- encourages judicious fertilisation practices so as to use only those quantities of fertilisers and treatment products needed to ensure plant health.

#### **4. for waste and disposal in water and air:**

- encourages the private and public sectors, through tax concessions, to practice selective gathering and recycling of domestic waste;
- introduces differential rates of VAT between nonrecyclable or non-reusable and recyclable or reusable material;
- ensures the introduction of levies on waste which charge those who actually pollute the environment;
- also takes into account aspects of air and water pollution and claims for the implementation of certain levels of strict limiting values for pollution by which a further burden on environment and health can be avoided effectively;
- establishes tradeable emission rights;
- reduces the need to dump organic domestic waste;
- encourages both on the farm and in new industrial enterprises, the recycling and further use of residues and waste from farm and food processing plants;

#### **5. for conservation:**

- ensures that information on environmental issues is freely available;
- ensures the right to participate in enquiries on environmental issues;
- calls upon the Council and the Commission immediately to approve the Directive on Habitats and a network of protected natural sites within the Community;
- establishes a Community-wide system of environmental labelling, showing such items as energy input and efficiency, levels of chemicals, additives and so on.

#### **6. for Third World Countries:**

- ensures that the best practices and most appropriate technologies are transferred to them, both by giving free advice and through environmentally responsible investment policies, and by ensuring, as far

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as possible, that local communities and individuals participate in development projects;

- takes into account that a social market economy which itself takes into consideration the specific historical, socio-economic and cultural conditions of the respective developing country is the best way for the solution of the problems of Third World countries;

- makes the principle of GATT the guidelines for a free world trade in agricultural products, by paying due attention to agricultural structures which keep in mind the environment, the protection of nature and the respective historical traditions of the countries concerned;

- emphasises that population growth in the Third World is the most serious obstacle for more wealth, better education and more effective environmental protection in developing countries;

- finances international programmes for environmental protection by means of exchanging the debts of Third World countries for conservation programmes, especially in the case of tropical forests and land management.

#### **7. to ensure its effective coordination**

- establishes the proposed European Environmental Agency with no further delay and in line with the competences given to European institutions in the field of environmental policy;

- firmly locates in the Agency the lead responsibility for setting and controlling standards for emissions, for creating and monitoring Community-wide labeling schemes, for facilitating environmental audits and buildings, and for coordinating Community-wide actions to reduce pollution and conserve resources;

- aims to carry out further work on the protection and enhancement of the rural, urban and marine environments of the Community.

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