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Canicule été 2003

Draft proposal for a resolution, Consequences of the heat wave in Europe

- Député européen (Verts, France) - Grandes batailles -

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The European Parliament,

- ▶ having regard to the long lasting drought and heat during spring and summer 2003, which had a wide range of major direct adverse impacts on human life, economic activities and the environment,
- ▶ having regard to Regulation (EEC) No 2158/92 on protection of the Community' s forests against fire as amended and the Common Position for a regulation concerning monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community (Forest Focus) (C5-0292/2003),
- ▶
- ▶ having regard to its resolution of 5 September 2002 on Floods in Europe and to its resolutions of 7 September 2000 on Fires in Europe and of 20 January 2000 and 14 April 2000 on the consequences of the storms in the winter of 1999 for the forestry industry and the environment,
- ▶ having regard to Regulation 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund ,
- ▶ having regard to Decision 1999/847/EC establishing a Community action programme in the field of civil protection,
- ▶

A.A- whereas the heatwave created enormous social, economic and environmental adverse impacts, such as thousands of deaths of vulnerable elderly people, the destruction of large areas of forests by fire, substantial losses in certain regions and production sectors of the European Union's agriculture, power cuts and transport problems,

B.B- whereas it is estimated that due to the heatwave about 15.000 people more than normal died because of heartstrokes and dehydration, amongst them especially elderly people,

C.C- whereas the weakness of elderly citizens in front of heatwaves has been overstrained by the absence of concrete support from family or social services in their neighbourhood,

D.D- whereas according to Article 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, "everyone has the right of access to preventive health care and the right to benefit from medical treatment",

E.E- whereas the provisions of Article 137 TEC refers to the Community's role to "support and complement the activities of the Member States in providing social protection", and whereas the Göteborg European Council decided, "in conformity with the open method of co-ordination to establish guidelines in the field of health and care for the elderly",

F.F- whereas direct damage as a result of the forest fires in Portugal is estimated by the Commission at EUR 946, 5 million, more than 0,6 % of the Portugues GNI and thus fulfils the criterium of a "major disaster" as defined in the European Union Solidarity Fund,

G.G- whereas on 27 August 2003 the European Commission proposed to mobilise the European Union Solidarity

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Fund for a grant of EUR 31.655 million for reimbursing the cost of emergency measures to deal with the fire-related disaster,

H.H- whereas Portugal is to re-allocate around EUR 180 million of its Structural Funds to revive economic activities, repair damage to public infrastructures as well as for measures to prevent such a disaster occurring in the future,

I.I- whereas some of the major losses in agriculture are due to insufficient adoption of agriculture practices and precautionary measures in view of an increasing climatic change, which is being recorded in the past decades,

J.J- whereas beyond a policy of compensation of severe economic losses, which should be carried out according to objective criteria and an assessment of the extent of reduced income due to the draught period, the Commission and the Member States should work out an integrated precautionary programme to adapt agricultural production practices to reduce the impact of severe floods and droughts and other natural disasters,

K.K- whereas this year's heatwave brought new heat records all over Europe with the highest temperatures since 1949 e.g. in France, Germany and the UK,

L- whereas a single natural disaster alone cannot be used as a scientific proof for climate change, however, scientific assessments indicate that extreme weather events might be on the increase due to global warming and climate change,

M- whereas over the last 30 years, a number of unprecedented extreme weather and climate events such as floods, tropical cyclones and droughts have occurred in various parts of the world ; whereas globally, over the last 10 years, the number of hydrometeorological disasters has doubled ; whereas worldwide, recurrent drought and desertification seriously threaten the livelihood of over 1.2 billion people who depend on the land for most of their needs,

N.N- whereas statistics compiled from insurance companies for the period 1950-1999 show that the major natural catastrophes which are mainly weather- and climate-related caused estimated economic losses of US\$ 960 billion,

O.O- whereas renowned international panels such as the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognised the problem of potential global climate change to be linked to excessive CO₂ and other greenhouse gases emissions ; whereas the IPCC furthermore alerted that there is a high probability that natural disasters like this year's heat waves, or last years floods and torrential rains might occur even more often and imply even more damage,

P.P- whereas only a few Member States are on track to meet their Kyoto targets, while others are largely failing on their burden sharing, putting the EU in severe difficulties in achieving its overall Kyoto commitment,

Q.Q- whereas unsustainable discharging of hot water into nearby rivers by nuclear power stations and the use of ground water to cool down the reactor core building are unacceptable,

R.R- Whereas the Commission's White Paper on 'Common Transport Policy up to 2010' underlined the problem of dramatic increase of CO₂-emissions by road and air transport,

S- whereas the European Council of Gothenborg endorsed the principle of decoupling transport growth from economic growth,

1.1- Is shocked about the high number of victims and expresses its deepest condolences to their relatives, expresses its sympathy and solidarity to the inhabitants of the stricken areas and pays tribute to the promptness and dedication of the firefighters and voluntary workers whose hard work helped limit the human and material damage ;

Social impact

2.2- Calls on the Commission to examine the tragic consequences of this summer's heatwave thoroughly and include the results already in its 'further proposals' on health care and long-term care for elderly as foreseen by this year's Spring Council for autumn 2003 ;

3.3- Calls on the Commission to give special attention to medical and social research of relevance to ageing in the 6th Framework Programme on Research ;

4.4- Asks the Commission to present a Green Paper about the protection of elderly people against climatic extremes, which should contain recommendations for the development of preventive health services combining public sector, private sector and third sector ;

Forest fires

5.5- Believes that the forest fires in Portugal constitute a "major disaster" and are as such eligible for funding from the Solidarity Fund ;

6.6- Points out that forest fires are a re-occurring phenomenon and regrets that not enough efforts have been made in recent years to take preventive measures, despite the availability of EU funding for such actions under structural funds, environmental and research programmes ;

7- Asks the Council to make all efforts to reach a second reading agreement in fall 2003 on the regulation concerning monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community to make sure that funds are already available in 2004 ;

Agriculture

8- Calls upon the Commission and the Member States to substantially increase the efforts for a sustainable management of water and soils in European farming practices following the recommendations of the European Soil Convention and the European framework directive on water ;

9- Calls upon the Commission to urge the Member States to clearly define and impose good agricultural practices as a compulsory condition for public funding, which include the improvement of the water storing capacities of soils and the use of regionally adapted drought resistant crop varieties ;

10- Calls upon the Commission and the Member States to set up a coherent European framework for precautionary measures within the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy, which supports farmers in adapting farming practices that can reduce the risks of yield losses provoked by extreme climatic conditions ;

Climate

11- Points out that, in order for all Member States to contribute to achieving the aggregate EU Kyoto target, not only serious additional measures will urgently be needed at national and EU level, but also that a "*stability pact against climate change*" needs to be proposed by the Commission to ensure that all Member States -as well as the EU as a whole- fulfil their Kyoto commitments ;

12- Demands that the recent initiative of the Italian Presidency on Trans-European infrastructure is made compatible with sustainable development and global reduction of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, and hence that its funds be fully directed towards railway transport and waterways ;

13- Urges the Council to finally adopt, as an urgent step in the right direction, the proposal for a Directive for the restructuration of the Community framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity ; considers of particular importance that this directive would open the way for member States, under certain conditions, to waive the unsustainable tax exemptions for fuel (kerosene) used in commercial aviation ;

14- Notes that European nuclear power stations have proven again not to be sustainable in economic, security and environmental terms ; asks therefore that all Member States that have not yet decided to shut down all their nuclear power stations to establish and implement a phase-out plan ;

15- Urges the Commission and each individual Member State to implement ambitious initiatives for the rapid phase-in of renewable energy and a reduction of its energy consumption by 1% annually through rapid and ambitious energy conservation programmes ;

Transport

16- Demands the Commission to guide its transport policy along the principle of decoupling transport growth from economic growth, conceiving a policy of transport prevention, promoting better transport and mobility management and intensifying its efforts for a shift towards more energy efficient modes of transport, such as inter alia intermodality, public/collective transport, car sharing and car pooling, rail, waterborne transport, walking and cycling ;

17- Urges the Commission to come up with substantial proposals for realizing fair and efficient pricing that internalizes the external social and environmental costs in the transport sector, starting with air and road freight transport, while allowing cross-subsidies in favour of rail, waterborne and combined modes ;

18- Demands the Commission to give strong priority to infrastructure projects of rail, water and combined transport, when proposing the revision of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) ;

19- Demands that a Strategic Environment Assessment, preceding decisions on TEN-T, should include as a major criteria the amount of CO₂-emissions ;

European civil protection

20- Demands the creation of a European civil protection body ("*casques verts*") to operate in case of environmental disasters ;

21- Instructs the President to forward this resolution to the European Commission, the Council, the Member States and the Accessing Countries.

PS:

Voir [présentation de la situation](#).