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# Climate change facts

New information confirming and deepening the scientific consensus on climate change is reported almost on a daily basis; evidence of melting ice caps, drought, floods, storms, rising sea level, shortages of freshwater, record temperatures, loss of animal species and the spread of disease from rapid increase of global temperature. According to scientific reports, limiting warming to + 2°C might be already too much to avoid a tipping point, leading to melting of Greenland ice sheet and sea level rise by up to 7 meters with catastrophic consequences. And, so far, we are not even on track to meet the reductions needed for to limit warming to 2°C.

Most of the negative effects of global warming will first hurt the poorest in the developing world - the World Food Programme has warned that erratic weather patterns threat the lives of up to 16 million people in the Horn of Africa.

**Green climate effort**

European Greens have striven to maintain the EU as a frontrunner - the Green environment ministers played a vital role in making the Kyoto Protocol a reality. The EU has completed its internal regulatory framework for our **Kyotocommitments to be binding** regardless of the delays in the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. Through the emissions trading scheme and its possibility for companies to use credits from emission reductions in developing countries, Europe has given life to the Kyoto system.

Over the past years the Greens have worked to **exclude nuclear** energy from the internationally accepted toolkit for combating climate policy. The Greens have battled to keep the EU to its policy of achieving at least **50% of the emission reductions in Europe**, that is, without the use of flexible mechanism instruments.

Key co-decision legislation related to climate change include Directive 2003/87/EC establishing EU emissions trading scheme (ETS) and the recently adopted Linking Directive providing for the possibility to use the credits from the so-called "flexible mechanisms" i.e. Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation in the EU ETS.

**Greens for a renewable economy future**

Industrialised countries must take the lead in cutting greenhouse gas emissions and ensure that the developing world has access to clean technology. The Greens will work towards achieving a **renewable economy** in Europe. In a medium term, **the EU must commit to reducing its emissions by 30% by 2020**. Main part of the reduction effort must be achieved within Europe, through the following policies:

A low emission economy without nuclear risks is not utopia. Most of the technology is already available, e.g. low energy houses, low-emission vehicles, efficient appliances, wind, hydro, biomass, solar and

geothermal energy - and with the right policies and economic incentives it can be deployed faster. Efficiency "negawatts" are the biggest energy source in Europe today.

Moving Europe towards a low emission economy will have many other benefits: cleaner air, health care savings, better security of supply, and savings in economic terms as well as in natural resources, not to mention lower risk of accidental or terrorist nuclear accidents and proliferation. Getting rid of oil-dependency would also make us safer. It will free us from supporting dictators ruling most of the oil producing countries, the ecological and human rights violations linked to oil-extraction, and bring about a more peaceful world.

**Reducing energy demand** through measures to cut transport volume and to stop wasteful use of energy and through improving energy efficiency of buildings, appliances and industrial processes. According to the European Commission estimates energy consumption in the Union is approximately 20% higher than can be justified on economic grounds. There is a large economic potential of unrealised energy savings. Without reducing comfort or standards of living, it is possible to reduce energy consumption by at least one fifth at no extra cost and in many cases with considerable profit. It has been estimated that over half of the EU Kyoto commitment could be met by requiring more energy efficient appliances. Improving efficiency of industrial motors could save 17 billion kWh of electricity in Europe.

**Increasing the use of renewable energy**, as an intermediary target 25% of EU energy should come from renewable sources by 2020. There is considerable potential for extending the use of biomass, wind, and solar power sources. A recent report by WWF and European Biomass Association indicated that biomass could provide 15-30% (from the current 1%) of the electricity demand from industrialised countries by 2020. The report further shows that the substantial increase of biomass for clean power production would require less than 2% of land from industrialised nations and will not compete with food production and nature conservation. The report says that the production of biomass will create up to 400,000 jobs by 2020, particularly in rural areas.

**Tackling transport emissions**. Air transport emissions must be capped and included in the emissions trading scheme from 2008 without free allocation. Research on light vehicles demonstrates there is plenty of scope for reducing the weight of private cars and subsequently their energy consumption. The EU must require more fuel efficient cars and legislate mandatory CO2 limits for fully equipped new cars to consume less than 3 liters/100 km. Measures to shift freight transport from road to rail and to favour public transport must be multiplied.

**Reducing emissions abroad - Kyoto Flexmex instruments**

Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Joint Implementation (JI) are mechanisms created by the Kyoto Protocol to enable governments to meet part of their greenhouse gas reduction commitments by developing emissions reduction projects in other countries. It is necessary to integrate the developing world into the efforts to tackle climate change. Ensuring that non-industrialised countries have access to a cleaner generation of technology is crucial in order to avoid rocketing greenhouse gas emissions as these countries develop.

**The Greens in the EP have supported the use of CDM and JI credits to comply with Kyoto commitments on the condition that the projects are "green" and produce real emission reductions, and that most of the reduction effort is done domestically within Europe.**

Due to the negative social and environmental impacts the Greens have opposed building large dams and allowing the use of greenhouse gas reduction credits from hydrological power projects which do not respect the World Commission of Damns criteria. The Greens also oppose reliance on forestry and sink projects since their permanence cannot be guaranteed, there is no reliable method for assessing the

emission reductions of plantations over time, and the possibility of using genetically modified varieties as well as other invasive alien species was not excluded in the international negotiations.

**Nuclear is part of the problem - not a solution**

The Green ministers ensured in the international negotiations that nuclear energy cannot be accredited under the CDM scheme for replacing energy coming from fossil fuels. Reducing global emissions must not lead to other threats and nuclear industry is not able to resolve its most crucial problems - safety, nuclear radiation and waste, or proliferation of nuclear arms - in addition to the human and material problems related to uranium supply. Relying on nuclear undermines genuine solutions to climate change. Nuclear power production cannot be adjusted according to demand, which has lead to over capacity and incentives for wasteful use of energy. Due to government subsidies and electricity pricing which does not reflect the real costs to society, nuclear power is a market distorter jeopardising a shift to a sustainable renewable energy economy.

The IPCC concluded already in 1996 that just to increase the share of nuclear to 47% of the world's electricity needs would require the construction of around 70 reactors per year until 2100. Any significant increase in nuclear capacity would mean the construction of fast-breeder reactors producing weapon grade material and a massive increase in nuclear waste reprocessing activities. And 20 years after the Chernobyl disaster we should not forget the catastrophic consequences for health, ecosystems, social and economic systems of nuclear accidents.

**The international context**

Under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, to which 186 countries including the EC and the US are Parties, industrialised countries are to return their greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000. The European Union has met this commitment. The Kyoto Protocol to that Convention goes a step further, by requiring industrialised countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by an average of 5% over the period 2008-2012. **The EU is committed under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 8% from 1990 levels by 2008-2012 and has set an objective of keeping the global warming to a maximum of +2°C compared to the pre-industrialised level.**

The United States agreed to reduce its emissions from 1990 levels by 7% under the Kyoto Protocol. President Bush has said that the U.S. will not ratify the Kyoto Protocol and, in 2002 announced a so-called domestic climate change policy based on a voluntary target which is likely to lead to an increase of over 30% in emissions above 1990 levels by 2010.

With the ratification of the Russian Duma the **Kyoto Protocol finally entered into force 16 February 2005**. The Protocol, and its implementation by countries which have ratified it, is important for taking that **first legally binding step to reduce emissions and for setting the rules on international accounting of emissions**. The entry in force of the legal framework against the opposition of the US administration is perhaps the biggest success in the history of EU diplomacy.

The EU must keep to its leadership and meet Kyoto Protocol targets mainly with domestic measures. The national allocation plans for industrial emissions for the period 2008-2012 in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme will have to show the seriousness of EU governments in responding to the challenge of climate change. Additional measures identified within the European Climate Change Programme need to be rapidly put in place throughout the EU. The main responsibility for deployment of clean technology is with the industrial countries. If Europe does not reduce its own emissions, we cannot expect poorer countries to commit to any restrictions.

It is crucial to convince the US to rejoin the international community in the fight against climate change. As a first step, the U.S. - the biggest global warmer  must live up to its responsibilities under the UNFCCC which requires industrialised countries to return their greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels.

The **discussions on the post 2012 commitment period were launched in Montreal December 2005**. EU needs to focus diplomatic efforts on major emitters and developing countries to find agreement in time to avoid any gap after 2012. The world cannot wait for the United States to change track, but must keep the door open for their re-engagement. International community must build on Kyoto Protocol "infrastructure" and legally binding reduction targets for main emitters. More countries will need to agree to binding limits on their greenhouse gas emissions. The integration of reduction efforts in developing countries can be done in stages and by sectors of economy taking into account the differences in their capacity to act.

**Assistance to adaptation** to climate change must be an integral part of the international agreement. Climate change is proving expensive already now: 30 000 premature deaths in Europe due to a heat wave during the summer of 2003, devastation caused by intensity of hurricanes such as Katrina, drought and famine in the Horn of Africa.

Within the EU a remarkable share of energy infrastructure is up for renewal within the next 10-15 years. Countries such as China and India are experiencing massive increases in energy production every year. The **window of opportunity to shift to more sustainable sources and to deploy better technology** must not be missed. Or, dangerous climate change will not be avoided.

The EU is a leader in renewable technologies, energy efficiency and sustainable mobility; every effort should be made to facilitate the transfer of that know-how to the developing world. As a third pillar of international climate policy the **EU must establish ambitious technology partnerships with developing countries** to support research, deployment and transfer of low-emission technologies. Public funding and EU initiatives must be geared to finding genuine solutions to climate change, which do not lead to other risks to society. Carbon capture and storage must be recognised as a temporary solution with limited potential, and we must not loose sight of the priority in developing renewable energy sources.

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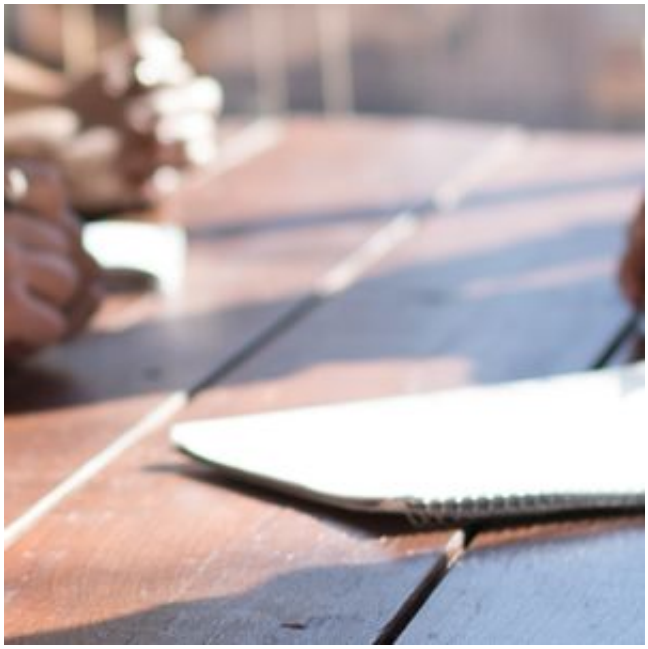
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