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European Parliament & EMAS

Greens welcome new European Parliament carbon offsetting policy

During its last plenary session in October, the European Parliament adopted a budget proposal to set-aside funds for a carbon offsetting policy. As the institution has committed to reduce 30% of its carbon emissions by 2020 in the framework of its environmental policy, this offsetting scheme is an important step. CO2 emissions to be compensated include the travel of officials between the three working places, the energy used in buildings and the emissions caused by the official driver service. (Greens Press Relase FR)

Greens have long led the way by setting an example in reducing their own emissions and welcome the development of the Parliament's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) scheme. However, it must also be underlined that offsetting should not lead the institution to forget about the pollution it creates and that priority should remain with raising efficiency standards, avoiding travel and choosing ecologic solutions for all aspects of the parliamentary work

Moreover, the Greens EMAS working group has asked the European Parliament to responsibly choose an offsetting organisation: It should invest in UN monitored Clean Development Mechanism projects and use so-called Gold Standard credits (excluding certain types of projects as an additional guarantee of sustainability). The calculation of flight offsets should take into account flight altitudes as well as the other climate impacts beyond CO2 emissions (on the basis of IPCC guidance). For more information on Green climate policy click here

Mindful of its own carbon footprint, the Greens/EFA group has since 2006 already been offsetting the climate effects of work related air travel by Members and Greens/EFA staff:

- Staff air travel is undertaken only if necessary and after a duly motivated request agreed by the committee coordinator and the financial working group. We also have a policy promoting video and phone-conferencing, limiting travel in general and especially to Strasbourg and favouring ecologic means of transport such as walking, biking and rail.
- MEPs of our group are also offsetting their travel emissions with the offsetting company of their choice; see for example the latest certificate of British Greens/EFA MEP Keith Taylor.

The Greens/EFA group will continue to push the institution to further reduce its ecologic footprint by becoming more efficient and increase the environmental performance of its work, as well as by

responsibly offsetting unavoidable carbon emissions.

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