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Technology transfer

Flexibility needed as well as innovation

Everybody is quick when it comes to asking for more technology transfer to developing countries. The parliament has stated several times in different resolutions the need to foster technology transfer. Obviously, developing countries need better access to climate friendly technology if we want to realise the transition to a zero carbon economy. But when it comes to the details, there is a lot of disagreement and it is not clear what it really means or implies. Although technological innovation is only part of the overall solution to climate change, it is an essential aspect of it. Innovation is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to lower the costs of mitigation, be it by improving energy output of existing technologies or by developing less carbon-intensive sources of energy, new renewable energy sources or technologies reducing demands and uses of energy. The Green Group in the European Parliament has finalised for the first time a group position paper on Climate Change, Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property. The paper examines the relationship between rigid Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and the transfer of climate friendly technology. As evidence shows that the way exclusive rights over knowledge and information are commonly currently implemented too often generate obstacles to both technology transfer and global collaborative research efforts, we call for the European Commission (EC) and European countries to implement and promote a flexible, innovative and effective approach. The main demands are:

- Public domain resources should not be privatised. They should be enriched by results from publicly funded research and should be made easily accessible.
- In the effort to make the public domain resources accessible, the EC and Member States should support initiatives aimed at gathering innovations in the form of patents which have either expired or are no longer maintained and make them publicly accessible.
- Publicly funded prizes and/or prize funds for climate change technology should be established at European level
- The EC should consider the stetting up of patent pools in order to allow the sharing of patented scientific data and increase collaborative efforts and R&D cooperation on specific technological needs.
- A more drastic possibility to ensure the diffusion of new technologies in poor countries could be to exclude climate change technologies from patenting and revoke existing IPR protections on such technologies in Least Developed Countries (LDCs). We encourage full discussion and consideration of this option.

- Read the paper here

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