



Resolution 748 (1981)¹

Energy and the economy

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering the report on energy and the economy submitted by its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development ([Doc. 4703](#)), and bearing in mind the conclusions of the Parliamentary Symposium held by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Energy Agency in Paris on 10 and 11 April 1981 ;
2. Aware that the quadrupling of the price of oil in 1973 and the spectacular increase during 1979 meant a financial loss to OECD countries equivalent, each time, to 2% of the gross national product, and a much more severe loss to the oil-importing developing countries ;
3. Believing that the rise in the cost of energy was a significant, though not the sole cause of the grave economic and social crisis now affecting all the industrialised countries, and that it is a major constraint which is directly influencing prices, economic activity and employment ;
4. Emphasising the need for the economies of the industrialised countries, whose growth over the last twenty years was based on a plentiful supply of cheap energy, to adjust to an ongoing situation of scarcer and dearer energy ;
5. Noting that, in spite of political upheavals in certain oil-exporting states, it has been possible to maintain supplies in recent months without any major problems, but that this favourable situation must not serve as an excuse for relaxing efforts to diversify resources, and to use them more economically and more rationally ;
6. Considering that an objective analysis of reserves reveals that the energy problem is not so much one of availability of resources as one of access to existing resources (oil from the ocean floor or from glacial regions, oil shales and tar sands, renewable energy sources, etc.) and of political and social constraints ;
7. Convinced that the high price of energy is not merely a reflection in monetary terms of the relative scarcity of resources, but also an incentive to exploit previously uneconomic reserves and to save energy ;
8. Considering that the fall in energy consumption in many countries cannot be wholly ascribed to the decline in economic activity, but convinced of the need for further forceful energy-saving measures ;
9. Aware of the positive effects which the energy crisis may have by speeding up the modernisation of certain activities, improving productivity, and opening up markets for certain specialised sectors of the economy, particularly in heat insulation and the manufacture of energy-saving materials ;
10. Trusting that importing countries will avoid creating once again through an unbalanced energy policy, the conditions for renewed dependence on a small number of countries exporting energy resources (e.g. uranium) ;
11. Fully aware that the oil-importing developing countries are the first and principal victims of the energy crisis, and also that situations differ from one Council of Europe member country to another and from region to region within these countries, and looking forward to a new international division of labour whereby the

1. Text adopted by the Assembly on 12 May 1981 (2nd Sitting). Assembly debate on 12 May 1981 (2nd Sitting) (see [Doc. 4703](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development).



financial surpluses of the oil-exporting countries would be allied to the technological expertise of the industrialised countries in solving the problems confronting the countries of the third world, particularly through greater recourse to solar energy and better use of hydroelectric power,

12. Invites the governments of Council of Europe member states to devise and co-ordinate their energy policies so as to pave the way for the implementation of a common energy policy fulfilling the following requirements ;

- a. Encourage greater energy self-sufficiency, and safeguard supplies by developing research, prospection and the exploitation of all existing energy resources ; to that end it is desirable :
 1. to develop offshore prospection for oil and the exploitation of new oil deposits through public assistance (especially financial), to research on equipment and modes of exploitation adapted to the exigencies of the surroundings ;
 2. to improve techniques for the conversion of coal to synthetic liquids and gases, and- in order to make it possible to exploit seams unreachable by traditional mining techniques- processes for in situ coal gasification ;
 3. to promote research on new and renewable energy sources which, even if they cannot replace oil in the short and medium term, would provide a contribution to specific energy needs and thus ease the pressure on the oil market ;
 4. for countries which have taken the nuclear option, to make an increased effort in terms of facilities, by giving priority to improved safety and waste storage methods, while respecting the wishes of the citizens and having regard to the environmental impact of nuclear power stations, and to promote increased research on new techniques making it possible to improve the efficiency of nuclear energy and ensure its long-term availability ;
 5. to install devices for the harnessing of natural energy (solar, geothermal, wind, wave and tidal energy, etc.) wherever circumstances permit ;
- b. Encourage such energy-saving measures as will help restore and maintain a satisfactory energy situation ; to that end it is desirable
 1. to have resolute recourse to price mechanisms by automatically adding any increase in price on to the final cost of energy (the recent American decision to withdrawn subsidies for locally produced oil constitutes substantial progress in this regard) ;
 2. to use fiscal machinery to encourage more energy-saving lifestyles and production processes, by taxing wasteful activities and products and subsidising operations or equipment designed to save resources or use them more rationally
 3. to promote public education and information campaigns on the need for a change in attitudes to energy now that it has become a precious commodity ;
 4. to develop education and vocational training programmes in the field of energy saving and the development of new and renewable energies in the context of the inter-university co-operation programmes of the Council of Europe Standing Conference on University Problems, thereby improving co-operation between research and teaching ;
 5. to make an intensive effort to furnish objective information on the various aspects of the nuclear issue ;
- c. Take measures to avoid any further sudden and erratic rise in the price of crude oil which would have devastating effects on the world economy ; to that end it is desirable :
 1. to consider the feasibility of fixing the price of crude oil (and possibly of paying it) according to a weighted basket of currencies or industrial production indices, with a view to maintaining stable terms of trade for oil-producing and oil-consuming countries ;
 2. to draw up medium and long-term fossil energy consumption plans, in order to permit production forecasts ;
 3. to study, in the context of the global round of negotiations initiated in the United Nations and its specialised agencies, procedures for trilateral co-operation between the industrialised countries, the oil-producing countries and the oil-importing developing countries.