



Resolution 1406 (2004)¹

Global warming: beyond Kyoto

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Global warming is one of the most serious challenges to the sustainable development of our planet and ultimately for the survival of humankind, especially as it threatens vital resources or spheres such as environment, food, health, economic activity, peace and security. It therefore requires a joint, responsible and solidarity-based response from the international community, including relevant machinery for framing measures aimed at averting the negative effects of climate change on the economy and populations and helping countries to adapt to this change.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe reiterates its ongoing commitment to sustainable development and, in particular, its backing of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change aimed at stabilising atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations as outlined in the Kyoto Protocol.

3. It refers, inter alia, to its Resolutions 1243 (2001) on the Kyoto Protocol on climate change: need for committed international solidarity and 1292 (2002) on the World Summit on Sustainable Development: ten years after Rio, as well as to its [Recommendation 1594 \(2003\)](#) on follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development: a common challenge.

4. In this connection, the Assembly welcomes the signing of the Kyoto Protocol but is concerned to see that its implementation has been delayed owing to the lack of agreement from a minority of countries, most notably the United States.

5. The Assembly welcomes the adoption by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, on 13 October 2003, of the Climate Directive ([Directive 2003/87/EC](#) on establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community and amending Council [Directive 96/61/EC](#)), setting an overall threshold for greenhouse gas emissions, in tandem with a market in emission allowances. The Assembly invites those European Union member states not yet having done so to submit their national allocation plans to the Commission as soon as possible so that the Climate Directive may enter into force on 1 January 2005.

6. The Assembly notes that emissions from industrialised countries rose by 13.6% between 1990 and 2001. It is thus vital that the international community commit itself to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and assume its responsibility for providing present and future generations with a viable and healthy environment.

7. Moreover, at a time when the energy needs of countries such as Brazil, China, India and other rapidly developing countries are expanding in step with their development, the increasing recourse to hydrocarbons and problems relating to world energy needs and supplies constitute grounds for reducing our own dependency upon fossil fuels and other sources of pollution by greenhouse gas emissions before the end of the century.

8. The Assembly is concerned about the possible proliferation of international flashpoints and the threat of wars over the growth of states overly dependant upon dwindling hydrocarbon resources, which are likely to be exhausted by the end of the century.

1. Assembly debate on 7 October 2004 (31st Sitting) (see [Doc. 10277](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Meale). Text adopted by the Assembly on 7 October 2004 (31st Sitting)., rapport de la commission de la culture, de la science et de l'éducation, rapporteur: M. Legendre).



9. It believes it vital to promote the development of and access to renewable energies as a priority. Furthermore, it points out that whilst such energy sources are largely local, other energy markets tend to be part of global operations.

10. The Assembly believes that renewable energies would help to eradicate or significantly reduce the poverty and energy dependency of developing countries, a great many of which have access to abundant supplies of such commodities. It therefore believes that it lies with advanced industrialised nations, those largely responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, to help the developing countries by sharing their technologies and know-how in order to help them achieve economic and environmental sustainability.

11. It stresses that governments and their parliaments, the driving forces in societal change, have a crucial role to play in global awareness-raising as well as in ensuring the security and well-being of their populations. It thus warns against forces which often attempt to steer their own minority interests to the forefront to take precedence over the rights and interests of humanity.

12. In relation to the cost of implementing the Kyoto Protocol, the Assembly recognises that it may have a real impact on countries' economies and that it is therefore necessary to pool efforts to find ways of minimising those costs and approaches that are acceptable to the countries and that make it possible to overcome the cost issues and contribute to the sustainable development of each country. However, the Assembly reiterates its belief that the costs of non-action are vastly underestimated, the consequences, such as extreme meteorological conditions caused by global warming, being disastrous for those nations affected.

13. Consequently, the Assembly invites its member and Observer states, to sign and ratify the Kyoto Protocol without delay.

14. The Assembly also invites the governments and parliaments of the member states of the Council of Europe:

14.1. to swiftly implement the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol ratified by them, inter alia, by giving and honouring specific undertakings aimed at significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions;

14.2. to take legislative measures and adopt tax reforms in the energy sectors, aimed at penalising fossil fuel consumption whilst encouraging the use of renewable energies and identifying new alternative energy sources;

14.3. to rationalise their transport policies by:

- a. developing public transport and supporting the development of hybrid vehicles;
- b. promoting freight transport by rail, sea, waterways and road-rail networks by offering greater incentives to those using them;
- c. controlling the development of air transport, in particular by taxing kerosene;
- d. applying tax systems which take into account the costs of transport and energy of any industrial location/relocation;

14.4. to adopt the regulations necessary to cut energy consumption in the construction and renovation of housing, in particular the imposition of higher standards for insulation or the use of energy resources;

14.5. to rethink the areas of agriculture and silviculture with a view to reducing greenhouse gases, in particular methane and nitrogen protoxyde emissions, whilst increasing CO2 absorption;

14.6. to introduce legislation necessary to encourage renewable energy use at all levels: the development of research towards this objective, promotion of industrial innovation, consumer accessibility, tax incentives, etc.;

14.7. finally, to launch information campaigns throughout the national media of all member states aimed at building awareness of the current state of the environment, the scale of the global warming phenomenon and the promotion of responsible policies and conduct by all citizens and industries.