

Brussels, 15 February 2008

Climate change: Swift adoption of Commission proposals by Council and EP will help achieve Kyoto targets

Early adoption by Council and Parliament of the European Commission's legislative proposals on climate change can help to ensure the European Union meets its Kyoto Protocol targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions, European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said today. He was speaking ahead of tomorrow's third anniversary of the Protocol's entry into force.

"The period during which the EU and other industrialised countries must meet our Kyoto emission targets - the 2008-2012 commitment period – started on 1 January this year," Commissioner Dimas said. "The most recent emission projections show we are on the right track, but the early adoption and implementation of proposals put forward by the Commission would help to ensure success. I am referring to legislation to reduce CO₂ emissions from cars and fuels and the inclusion of aviation in the Emissions Trading System from 2011. Swift action on last month's climate action and renewable energy package will also give us an early start towards meeting our ambitious targets for 2020."

Kyoto commitments

Under the Kyoto Protocol the EU-15 Member States are committed to reducing their collective greenhouse gas emissions over the 2008-2012 period to an annual average of 8% below levels in the chosen base year (1990 in most cases).

EU-15 greenhouse gas emissions in 2005 - the latest year for which full data are available – were 2% lower than base year levels. The latest projections from Member States indicate that measures already taken, together with the purchase of emission credits from third countries and forestry activities that absorb carbon from the atmosphere, will cut EU-15 emissions in 2010 to 7.4% below base year levels - just short of the 8% reduction target. Additional policies and measures under discussion at EU and national levels will allow the target to be reached and even take the reduction to 11.4% if implemented promptly and fully (see [IP/07/1774](#)).

Additional policies and measures under discussion at EU level include the Commission's proposals to include aviation in the EU ETS from 2011 (see [IP/06/1862](#)), to require a 10% cut in greenhouse gas emissions from transport fuels between 2011 and 2020 (see [IP/07/120](#)) and to reduce CO₂ emissions from new cars (see [IP/07/1965](#)). They are presently being considered in the Council and the European Parliament under the co-decision procedure.

The climate action and renewable energy proposals put forward by the Commission last month (see [IP/08/80](#)) focus on meeting objectives for 2020 but already create greater certainty for investors and could also help meet the Kyoto target if adopted and implemented rapidly.

Kyoto obligations

The start of Kyoto's commitment period means that Member States must comply with a number of obligations and reporting requirements if they want to use the Protocol's flexible mechanisms, through which emission credits can be bought and sold.

"I urge all Member States to fulfil all their obligations and reporting requirements strictly. They must do this in order to be able to use the Kyoto mechanisms," Commissioner Dimas said. "It is particularly important that all Member States have in place a national system for estimating their emissions, and for removing greenhouse gases through carbon sinks."

2020 commitments

While the Kyoto targets are an important first step, much stronger action will be needed after they expire in 2012 in order to prevent climate change from reaching dangerous levels. Based on the scientific evidence, the EU considers that global emissions need to be cut by at least 50% of 1990 levels by 2050.

In this perspective, the March 2007 European Council meeting called for developed countries to reduce their collective emissions to 30% below 1990 levels by 2020. It committed the EU to a cut of this amount if other developed countries agree to make comparable efforts in the context of a new global climate change agreement for post-2012. Following the successful conclusion of last December's UN climate change conference in Bali (see [IP/07/1941](#)), negotiations on a new global agreement are due to start at the end of next month and to be completed by the end of 2009.

The European Council also committed the EU to reducing its emissions by at least 20% by 2020, regardless of action by other countries, in order to transform Europe into a highly energy-efficient, low-carbon economy. Last month's climate action and renewable energy package of proposals is one of the main means to implement the EU's climate and energy targets for 2020.

"By implementing the most ambitious set of climate and energy targets anywhere in the industrialised world we are once again demonstrating the European Union's leadership in addressing climate change," Commissioner Dimas said. "This is crucial as we head into negotiations on a new global agreement. We now look to other developed countries to live up to their responsibilities and follow our example."

Further information:

DG ENV climate change pages http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/home_en.htm