

SUPPORTING EUROPE'S
PARLIAMENTARIANS



COMBATING
CLIMATE CHANGE
MAINTAINING
MOMENTUM

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CLIMATE CHANGE – HEADLINE MESSAGE

SCIENCE

Some change to our climate is now inevitable, due to historical and present emission levels. It is now vital we avoid triggering catastrophic change.

We are already seeing the impacts of climate change – arctic ice melt, altered bud burst and migratory patterns, increasingly extreme weather events and drought.

It is all about probabilities: limiting the rise in global temperature to the EU's target of 2°C only limits the risk of catastrophic change, it does not offer any guarantee. Reducing 1990 emissions by 25-40% by 2020 only offers a 50% chance of staying below this 2°C limit.

There are – and will remain – uncertainties over the precise nature of change, but crucially the more rapidly and the further we reduce emissions, the better our chances.

CALL TO ACTION

It is cumulative emissions that count, i.e. those emitted historically as well as now and in the future. Swift action is key to reducing the collective burden.

Emissions must peak between 2015 and 2020 to retain a positive probability of staying below 2°C, and then start to fall globally.

Adaptation to unavoidable changes in climate will be necessary in tandem with mitigation – in combination this will help to limit the impacts of current change as well as reducing future vulnerability.

Action to combat climate change offers the opportunity to transform our economies and energy systems, generating jobs and future security. To capture the full benefits in Europe this requires concerted, effective measures to deliver a significant proportion of reduction within the EU.

Working towards a low carbon economy is a central challenge over the next decade and beyond. The foundations for this shift should be in place by 2014.

DELIVERING CHANGE

Climate change is a global problem. It requires a global solution that recognises the inequity between emissions to date and great variations in wealth, vulnerability and severity of climate change impacts. EU leadership is essential.

An agreement at Copenhagen is vital; the longer we wait to combat climate change the greater the risks posed, the more limited our options become, and the greater the expense will be.

In the event of an international deal Europe must deliver on its commitment to ramp up ambition from 20 to 30% (or more) reductions by 2020. This would better reflect our responsibility for historical emissions.

EU leadership implies both setting ambitious policy targets and delivering credible emission reductions domestically; the effectiveness and credibility of implementation must be closely monitored.

Europe already has some of the policy tools to act, such as the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), but these must be added to and made more effective and ambitious. Combating climate change needs a progressive and perpetual increase in effort.

The upcoming EU budget review offers the opportunity to reorientate EU spending to better support climate action.

INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

IEEP is an independent not for profit institute dedicated to advancing an environmentally sustainable Europe.

IEEP's diverse research team are expert in climate policy, focusing both on mitigation and adaptation challenges. Since 2003 IEEP has worked for the European Parliament offering independent support to MEPs sitting on the ENVI Committee. In addition IEEP conducts independent research into Europe's efforts to promote climate action, helping to define future policy and best practice approaches to implementation.

Visit www.ieep.eu/briefingsonclimate for:

- Briefing materials translated into Bulgarian, Czech, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Romanian and Spanish.
- A full bibliography, lists of the key organisations engaged in the development of EU climate policy and further analysis including a timetable for EU and international action on climate between 2009 and 2014.

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