

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
THE COUNCIL

Brussels, 26 May 1989

6870/89

RESTREINT

cc. (fax)

ENV 99

REPORT

from : Permanent Representatives Committee

to : Council

No. prev. doc.: 6120/89 ENV 65

No. Cion prop.: 9900/1/88 ENV 211 REV 1 (f,d,i,nl,dk,gr,es,p)
COM(88) 656 final

Subject: The Greenhouse Effect and the Community

1. On 28 November 1988, the Commission transmitted a communication to the Council on "The Greenhouse Effect and the Community".

2. In this communication, the Commission refers to the results of scientific studies which, despite a large number of uncertainties, indicate that :
 - a major change is taking place in the composition of the atmosphere due to human activities ;
 - this change will lead to climate changes ;
 - such climate changes will have major physical and socio-economic repercussions in the long term.

In view of the size of the problem, the Commission considers that a concerted long-term strategy is essential in order to reverse the current trends and that the Community, as an important emitter of one of the main gases contributing to the greenhouse effect (CO₂), has a major contribution to make in the search for a solution both within the Community and in the wider international context. For this reason the Commission has established the action plan set out in its communication.

In order to give a political impetus to this action plan, the Commission has further proposed a draft Resolution for approval by the Council.

3. The Commission's communication and the draft Resolution have been examined in the high level ad hoc Group on the Greenhouse Effect and in the Permanent Representatives Committee.
4. All delegations welcomed the Commission's communication and generally supported the approach suggested by the Commission.

Emphasis was placed in the course of debate on the following considerations :

- the need for measures to be taken at the widest possible international level, for example in the framework of a global Convention ;
- the need to intensify research into the greenhouse effect and its consequences ;
- the need for a review of Community policies particularly in the energy sector ;
- the importance of preventive as well as corrective measures ;

- the need to establish specific priorities for action in the short/medium term. Such priorities could be : further measures for the protection of the ozone layer ; measures to curb emissions of greenhouse gases ; energy conservation ; afforestation and coastal protection.

5. In the light of discussion in the Permanent Representatives Committee, the Chair has established a revised draft of the proposed Council Resolution taking into account comments of delegations.

The revised draft is set out in Annex I for consideration by the Council.

6. The German delegation has moreover requested the inclusion in the Council minutes of the statements set out in Annex II.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION
ON THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT AND THE COMMUNITY

- Revised draft Resolution text proposed by the Chair -

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES :

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community,

Having regard to the draft resolution from the Commission,

Whereas the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community provides for the development and implementation of action by the Community on the environment ;

Whereas the available scientific data, in particular results from Community Environmental Research Programmes, show that the composition of the atmosphere is being significantly modified by human activities and according to the available climatic models this could bring about, by the so called "Greenhouse effect", climatic modifications having a serious impact on the environment, on human beings and their activities ;

Whereas it is therefore urgent to examine possibilities for action aiming at preventing or reducing the risks involved in the greenhouse effect ;

Whereas the European Council held at Rhodes in December 1988 underlined the need for an effective international response to global problems such as the greenhouse effect ;

whereas in the framework of recent international conferences, in particular those held in Toronto in June 1988, and in London and The Hague in March 1989, a very broad consensus has been reached on the need for urgent consideration of measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases ;

Whereas, given the complexity of the greenhouse effect and the many and far-reaching implications both of the greenhouse effect and of possible measures to prevent or to mitigate its consequences, a careful prior examination of policy options is required ;

whereas it is important that the Community and its Member States should make an effective contribution to the elaboration of policy decisions within the appropriate international fora ;

1. **UNDERLINES** the global dimension of the "Greenhouse effect" and the need for the Community and the Member States to play their full part in the definition and implementation of a global response to the problem. Such a response should be made without further delay, irrespective of remaining uncertainties on some scientific aspects of the greenhouse effect ;
2. **CONSIDERS** that the conclusion of an international agreement on climate change is necessary ; **WELCOMES** the preparatory work presently underway in the framework of UNEP and WMO ; **CONFIRMS** that the Community and the Member States must make an important contribution to the preparation of such an agreement ;

3. **CONFIRMS** that, in accordance with the conclusions of the Council of 2 March 1989, the Community will participate actively in the revision by 1990 of the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer with the aim of eliminating production and consumption of CFCs regulated by that Protocol by the end of the century ; furthermore, **DECLARES** that present levels of consumption and production of these CFCs, both within the Community and worldwide, should be reduced by at least 85% as soon as possible ; **NOTES** that action must also be taken regarding other substances which are relevant to the greenhouse effect including CFCs which are not covered by the Montreal Protocol ;
4. **DECLARES** that afforestation and measures to improve vegetation cover within the Community should be intensified and that the Community should play its full part in international efforts to arrest the destruction of the tropical rain forests and the process of desertification ;
5. **INVITES** the Commission to reconsider as soon as possible existing Community policies and orientations which may no longer be appropriate in the light of the need to combat the greenhouse effect ; **DECLARES** that the Community and its Member States should take proper account in future policy decisions of the problem of potential climate change linked to the greenhouse effect ; **INVITES** the Commission and Member States to take urgent action to increase energy savings ; to improve energy efficiency ; to promote the development and use of energy sources, such as non-fossile fuels, which will not contribute to the greenhouse effect ; and to give high priority to the development and introduction in the Member States of innovative commercially viable technologies in these fields. In this context due account must be taken of safety aspects, security of supply, environmental impact, public health and economic considerations ;

6. **INVITES** the Commission urgently to consider action in the framework of Community aid programmes for developing countries aiming at reconciling their development requirements with constraints stemming from the greenhouse effect, and helping them, when needed, to adapt to the potentially unavoidable impact of the greenhouse effect ;
7. **STRESSES** the importance and urgency of intensifying national and Community research efforts and studies so as better to understand the greenhouse effect and assess its potential environmental and socio-economic impact ;
8. **WELCOMES** the initiative of the Commission to launch a substantial policy-options study programme ; **CONSIDERS** that the main areas of such a programme should be :
- identification and technical assessment of measures and technologies which can help reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular CO₂, or other measures, including afforestation and prevention of forest fires, which can otherwise combat the greenhouse effect ;
 - analysis of environmental, economic, industrial, energy, social, agricultural and institutional implications of possible measures and technologies ;
 - evaluation of likely benefits of different policy options by use of a decision analysis framework ;

- identifying measures, such as further coastal protection, necessary to adapt to new situations which the decision analysis exercise demonstrates are likely to arise as an unavoidable result of the greenhouse effect and elaborating, where necessary, Community policies to implement such measures ;

9. **INVITES** the Commission, in executing the work programme, to take full account of other relevant activities on related subjects both inside the Community and worldwide, particularly the work of IPCC ⁽¹⁾ ; **URGES** Member States to cooperate actively with the Commission in the execution of the programme and to coordinate their relevant activities within that framework ;
10. **INVITES** the Commission and the Member States to ensure that public opinion is fully informed about the greenhouse effect, and the action necessary to combat it, in particular the need for effort on a world-wide scale and involving the contribution of every citizen ;
11. **INVITES** the Commission to present a progress report by mid 1990 and a final report by the end of 1991 at the latest, including proposals for concrete action in the areas referred to above, in particular for measures relating to the problem of CO₂, with a view to making an effective contribution to the wider international debate.

(1) Intergovernmental panel on climate change.

ANNEX IISTATEMENTS IN THE COUNCIL MINUTES PROPOSED BY THE GERMAN DELEGATIONJoint statement by the Council and the Commission

"The Council and the Commission are agreed that approval of the Resolution does not prejudice the question of the financing of the implementation of the Commission's action plan."

Unilateral statement by the Commission

"The Commission states that the budget appropriations which it will request, if necessary, for the implementation of the Resolution including the proposed action plan will be financed in the framework of the relevant multiannual financial perspective (Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission)."