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Subject : Climate Change:

- Medium and longer term emission reduction strategies, including targets
 - = Council conclusions
-

Delegations will find attached the conclusions adopted by the Council (Environment) on
10 March 2005.

Climate Change:
- Medium and longer term emission reduction strategies, including targets -
= Council conclusions =

The Council of the European Union,

1. strongly WELCOMES the recent entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, which is the first ever legally binding instrument to combat climate change containing quantified emission limitation or reduction commitments and which constitutes an essential first step towards meeting the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ("the Convention") of stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system; REAFFIRMS that, with a view to meeting this objective, overall global annual mean surface temperature increase should not exceed 2°C above pre-industrial levels; EMPHASISES the findings of the Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC TAR) that significant further steps will be necessary to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and limit adverse effects of climate change.

2. WELCOMES the Commission's communication "Winning the battle against global climate change"; NOTES that there is increasing scientific evidence that the benefits of limiting overall global annual mean surface temperature increase to 2°C above pre-industrial levels outweigh the costs of abatement policies; UNDERLINES the importance of the immediate and effective implementation of agreed policies and measures, the need to foster increased public awareness, the need for better focused research and the promotion of stronger co-operation with third countries; EMPHASISES that the EU's future climate change strategy should strive at the widest possible cooperation by all countries, include all important greenhouse gases, sectors and mitigation options, drive technological innovation, employing an optimal mix of "push" and "pull" policies, in particular in the transport and energy sector, promote the transfer of technologies to appropriate markets, provide for the continued use of market-based and flexible instruments, and support the adaptation to unavoidable climate change in all countries, particularly in the most vulnerable developing countries;

UNDERLINES that public funding channelled *inter alia* through development banks needs to be used to leverage private sector funding towards climate-friendly investments, particularly in the low greenhouse gas emitting energy technologies; INVITES the European Commission to continue its analysis of benefits and costs, focusing *inter alia* on the costs of adaptation to climate change, the benefits of climate change policies, the costs of inaction and an economic evaluation of the damages caused by climate change, including indirect effects, impacts on competitiveness as well as the costs of emission scenarios enabling greenhouse gas concentrations to remain well below 550 ppmv CO₂ equivalent.

3. TAKES NOTE of the report from the Commission "Catching up with the Community's Kyoto target" which shows that greenhouse gas emissions from the 25 EU Member States in 2002 were 9% lower compared to base year levels and those of the EU-15 decreased by 2,9%; STRESSES that the planned additional policies and measures are necessary to achieve the collective EU-15 Kyoto target, notably in the energy and transport sectors where emissions are projected to continue to grow significantly; RECONFIRMS in this context its invitation to the European Commission to develop a strategic framework on climate change measures and technologies under the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP); EMPHASISES that this new phase of the ECCP should review progress and explore new actions to systematically exploit cost effective emission reduction options in synergy with the Lisbon strategy with a view to preparing the ground for significant longer term emission reductions; INVITES the European Commission to take stock of the effectiveness of current policies and measures and consider further action as appropriate; further INVITES the European Commission to explore the role of Community action in reducing vulnerability and promoting adaptation, while recognizing the importance of national, local and sectoral efforts to address the adverse impacts of climate change.

4. REAFFIRMS the December 2004 (Environment) Council conclusions and ENCOURAGES the 2005 Spring European Council to send a strong political message based on the following elements:

- the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries, and their participation in an effective, cost-efficient and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common, but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities;
- the EU therefore looks forward to engaging with all Parties to the Convention in an open dialogue on what further action is required as a next step to move towards the ultimate objective of the Convention;
- the relevant Council formations should reinvigorate their efforts to integrate climate change objectives into their policy areas;
- recent scientific research and work under the IPCC indicate that it is unlikely that stabilisation of concentrations above 550 ppmv CO₂ equivalent would be consistent with meeting the 2°C objective and that in order to have a reasonable chance to limit global warming to no more than 2°C, stabilisation of concentrations well below 550 ppmv CO₂ equivalent may be needed;
- recent scientific research and work under the IPCC indicate that keeping this long-term temperature objective within reach will require global greenhouse gas emissions to peak within 2 decades, followed by substantial reductions in the order of at least 15% and perhaps by as much as 50% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels;

- in view of the global emission reductions required, global joint efforts are needed in the coming decades, in line with the common, but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, including significantly enhanced aggregated reduction efforts by all economically more advanced countries. Without prejudging new approaches for differentiation between Parties in a future fair and flexible framework, the EU looks forward to exploring with other Parties possible strategies for achieving necessary emission reductions and believes that, in this context, reduction pathways by the group of developed countries in the order of 15-30% by 2020 and 60-80% by 2050 compared to the baseline envisaged in the Kyoto Protocol should be considered;
 - the European Commission should be invited to continue its analysis of costs and benefits of reduction strategies enabling greenhouse gas concentrations to remain well below 550 ppmv CO₂ equivalent, including costs of inaction, taking into account both environmental and competitiveness considerations.
5. INVITES the European Council to keep the issue of medium and longer term emission reduction strategies, including targets, under regular review, taking into account the results of the work carried out within the UNFCCC.

