

CLIMATE CHANGE – A GLOBAL ISSUE

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ABSTRACT

Environmental protection is an area of major worldwide concern. The fight against global warming is one of the basic tools of environmental policies and legislation.

Climate change is considered to be one of the most important environmental issues. This concern reflects the reality: that so much of human activity is sensitive to climate change, and that adapting to current and projected rates of climate change could be very challenging. It also shows that human perturbation of the climate system is essentially irreversible.

As we know, climate change is occurring and the climate system is warming. The conclusive evidence leading to this conclusion includes not only the noticeable increases in average global air and ocean temperatures, but also the widespread melting of snow and ice and the overall rise of the global sea level.

Climate change deeply impacts nature and population, and represents a long-term shift in weather conditions, identified by changes in temperature, precipitation, winds and many other indicators. Also, climate change can involve both changes in environmental conditions and changes in variability, including extreme events.

Both categories of triggering factors – the ones related to natural processes and the ones related to human activity – cause constant climate change, operate on different time scales and are responsible for overall changes in the earth’s climate. In addition to the natural causes of climate change, changes specific to the climate system, such as variations in ocean currents or atmospheric circulation, can also influence the climate.

Climate change has brought about severe and possibly permanent alterations to our planet’s geological, biological and ecological systems. All these changes have led to the emergence of large-scale environmental hazards to the health of humans, such as extreme weather, ozone depletion, loss of biodiversity and stresses to food-producing systems.

Keywords: climate change, environmental protection, environmental policies, sustainable development, global issue, global warming

1. Introduction

From the perspective of sustainable development, the environment represents a hierarchy of organizational and ecological systems, and in this context, the environmental protection must follow the subsequent objectives: rational management of resources, avoiding imbalances ecological, avoiding environmental pollution, the environmental reconstruction and fighting against climate change.

Climate change is one of the largest threats to ever menace humankind and it is the clearest example of where the needs of the future generations are compromised by current generations’ lifestyle.

Environmental protection against climate change is an area of major concern in the European Union and in the entire world. But, the present European regulations concerning environmental protection against climate change and sustainable development do not allow the adoption of a coherent and accurate global politic in this domain.

2. Contents and analysis

The main dangers that environment is facing presently are the climate changes and the technological development. There are numerous conventions adopted at international level and at regional level regarding environmental protection.

These conventions cover the fundamental areas of environment having leading towards the adoption of an active politic with the purpose of preserving biodiversity and the interdiction of pollution in general.

At the European Union level these past years are characterized by efforts for the creation of a legal frame that allows, on the one hand, the cover of damages caused by pollution and the management of general dispositions regarding the environment, on the other hand, the diminution of the negative consequences against nature.

Concerning the applicable law in this domain, it must be mentioned that in the relations between the European Union member-states are applicable not only the ratified conventions, but also the documents adopted by the European Parliament and other institutions as well as the general principles of international law.

Within the European Community, the environmental protection and durable development policies represent an essential component of the long and medium term policy that is the source of the durable development of the European Community. The main objectives of EU policies encompass the protection of the environment through economic and legislative instruments, as well as the implementation of adequate measures in order to efficiently countervail pollution. The European Community is elaborating and supporting its environmental policies based on technical and scientific data, also taking the concrete environmental conditions of the different E.U. regions into consideration.

After the Treaty of Lisbon has been enforced, the European Parliament has resolutely asserted itself as a co-legislator with extended competence in the environmental protection area, exerting a democratic control over all the European institutions.

Regarding the environmental protection against the big problem that is global warming, this is currently a prime area of cooperation and international regulations, which assumes a global or across the borders dimension. The persistence, causes and inter-temporal nature of global warming, call for regional and global actions of prevention.

In this context, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on March 2009 on EU strategy, for a comprehensive climate change agreement in Copenhagen and the adequate means of financing for a climate change policy.

The third Conference in the field of climate change, held in Kyoto, Japan in 1997 , represented a step forward in addressing climate change and it occurred after the adoption of the Framework Convention. During this event the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change was adopted, in February 2005, a document that establishes a series of common but differentiated responsibilities of States in order to reduce greenhouse gas. Awareness of the climate problem both in the international and national community became obvious through the very ratification by most countries. However, although this protocol has provided a specific legal and economic device for the battle against climate change, also proposing targets for reducing the greenhouse gas emissions, compliance with these commitments has been a big problem.

The main goal of the 15th International Conference of the Parties, held in December 2009 in Denmark, Copenhagen, was the signing of an interim Accord that establishes the overall legal and institutional steps toward a final Accord, which ended in 2012, that would establish specific national commitments on reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. In the provisions of this Resolution, The European Parliament called for the EU to continue developing a foreign climate policy and adopt a unified position in order to maintain its leadership role in the negotiations at COP 15, and also to support the ambitious goals in the discussions with the international partners so as to reach an ambitious international Accord at the Conference from Copenhagen in December 2009, adapted to the latest scientific findings and in line with the objective of 2°C.

The European Parliament believes that the Copenhagen Accord should bind the parties to mandatory reductions and international sanctions, to be defined for non-compliance.

The resolution on the EU strategy for the Copenhagen conference on climate changes, was based on a series of previous international documents, resolutions and recommendations of the European Parliament and Council. In this context we like remember: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Kyoto Protocol to the Framework Convention, ratified in 2006; Plan of Action adopted at the Conference in Bali (Decision 1/COP 13), 2007; 15th Conference of Parties (COP 15) to the UNFCCC and the 5th Conference of the Parties serving as Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 5), Copenhagen, Denmark , 2009; Climate-energy package of regulations adopted by the Parliament on 2008, in particular Directive 2009/29/EC of the European Parliament and European Council in 2009 amending Directive 2003/87/EC on the improvement and expansion of the community trading of emissions of greenhouse gases , and Decision. 406/2009/CE European Parliament and the Council in 2009 on the national effort to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases to meet the Community's commitments to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020 ; Directive 2008/101/EC of the European Parliament and European Council of November 2008 amending Directive 2003/87/EC to include aviation activities in the system for trading greenhouse gas emission trading within the Community; Commission Communication entitled "Enhancing financing efforts to combat climate change: A European model for Accord in Copenhagen" (COM (2009) 0475); Previous resolutions on climate change, in particular Resolution of 4 February 2009, entitled "2050: The future begins today - Recommendations for the EU's future integrated policy on climate change" and resolution in March 2009 on the EU strategy for a comprehensive Accord in Copenhagen climate change and to ensure adequate funding of climate change policy; Joint Statement in December 2005 of the Council of Europe and the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy; European Council Resolution in October 2008, entitled "Building a Global Climate Change Alliance between the European Union and poor developing countries most vulnerable to climate change ; Rules of Procedure (110) of the European Council.

The climate changes are estimated to be a global issue that represent a challenge for which there is no single policy solution, but a combination of existing opportunities and increase in efficiency in all economic and social fields as well as developed countries and the developing would help solving the problem of resources and distribution, thereby paving the way for a third industrial revolution.

The Resolution regarding "Adaptation to climate changes: Towards a European framework for action", has as a legal basis, the following resolutions adopted by the European Parliament on climate changes: European Parliament's resolution of April 2008, entitled: "Adapting to climate changes - options for EU action" ; European Parliament's resolution of February 2009, entitled "2050: The future begins today - recommendations on EU's future integrated policy on climate change" ; European Parliament's legislative resolution of September 2009, relating to forest fires in the summer of 2009 ; European Parliament's resolution of November 2009 on the EU Strategy for the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change (COP 15) ; European Parliament's resolution of February 2010, in connection with the results of the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change (COP 15) ; Resolution on European youth fighting against climate change, 2008, Catalonia, Spain; United Nations Framework - Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC and the outcome of the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Copenhagen ; Directive 2009/29/EC of April 2009 amending Directive 2003/87/EC to improve and extend the EU emissions trading of greenhouse gas ; Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament; Report of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and opinions of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, the Committee on Transport and Tourism, the Regional Development Committee and the Committee on Fisheries; ETUC Resolution on EU position at Durban in South Africa, for the COP 17, 2011; European Parliament Resolution on the Climate Change in Doha Qatar, for the

COP 18, 2012; European Parliament Resolution on the Climate Change in Lima, Peru, for the COP 20, 2014;

3. Conclusions

Climate change is happening now and is having very real consequences on people life. It is a constant natural process, whose past evolutions have always had effects on living conditions on the planet. The process of climate change includes both climate related factors such as ocean variability and glaciations and non-climate factors are objects of permanent study and recognized as causes of climate changes.

On the other hand, a consensus has been reached by the international scientific community that the most recent period of climate change is influenced by natural causes and by human-made factors as well (deforestation, intensive agriculture, land use etc.).

The reports of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, have established an accelerated global warming caused by the enormous increase in certain gas emission produced in our society (aerosols consumption, fossil fuels, cement manufacture etc.).

Participants at The Second World Summit of Legislators, who took place in June 2014 in Mexico-City, Mexico, organized by the Global Legislators Organization (GLOBE), agreed on a Legislator Resolution encouraging national governments and the United Nation to take a main actions, with a focus on strengthening climate change mitigation.

Representing one of the most significant and challenging issues, a very serious risk of dangerous and effectively irreversible climate impacts, climate change is one of the basic tools of environmental policies and legislation, and it consequently determines the future investment decisions at national, regional and global levels.

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