

Resolution concerning Monitoring in the Climate Alliance

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of 20th May
1999 in Apeldoorn

Text of the resolution

The Member Municipalities of the Climate Alliance have adopted far-reaching climate protection targets and have committed themselves to the protection of the rainforest and the support of indigenous peoples. Their approach of including global considerations into local policy has been confirmed by world-wide agreements such as Agenda 21, the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

With the aim of better assessing progress towards Climate Alliance objectives, and of being able to develop further their policies and measures, the members shall prepare guidelines for monitoring progress in reducing carbon dioxide emissions. For this purpose an Ad-hoc- working group will be installed to prepare a proposal within the next six months.

As a new instrument for monitoring, a set of indicators is to be elaborated. These indicators shall be designed such that a step-by-step introduction is possible. They should be applicable for all Member Municipalities and they should cover all fields of action of the Climate Alliance. To this end, an international working group will be established who will present draft proposals to the coming General Assembly in the year 2000.

Considerations

On 30 March 1999, the European Secretariat presented a proposal for a resolution text on monitoring. This text and the adjoining considerations were subject to a discussion during the Annual Conference and General Assembly in Apeldoorn, on May 19 and 20. During this discussions there was expressed a need to further elaborate various aspects of the inventorisation of CO₂ emissions.

It was stated that, in order to achieve a maximum impact on the results and usefulness of monitoring system, and its step-by-step introduction, the working group should make great efforts to find some balance between their own research, and the research and ideas already available throughout Europe. It is recommended to the members to provide all useful information on methodologies applied in case they already monitor their climate protection activities. The working group shall rely on their experience and seek to find support outside the Climate Alliance as well. Furthermore, the international working group shall pay explicit attention to the guidelines given in the earlier proposal and to the results of the discussions during the 1999 Conference.

Explanations

Agreements until now in the Climate Alliance

It was agreed by a decision taken at the General Assembly in 1993 that the target of halving CO₂ emissions by 2010 as envisaged by the Manifesto refers to the specific CO₂ emissions per inhabitant. On the international negotiation level as well, per capita values

for the reduction of greenhouse gases are under discussion in order to better satisfy the criterion of international equity.

Further agreements in the Climate Alliance are:

- Inventorisation of CO₂ emissions shall cover those quantities that are generated by energy consumption and transport within the municipality.
- The upstream process chains shall be included (extraction, transportation and conversion of energy sources).
- Specific local structures or changes in these structures shall be taken into consideration by examining the industrial sector separately.

The member municipalities of the Climate Alliance shall prepare and publish at regular intervals a report presenting the climate protection measures realised until that date and the CO₂ emissions reduction achieved thereby.

Goals and means of monitoring

Monitoring shall serve the following purposes:

- Ascertaining the initial situation and estimating the global warming impacts of activities within a municipality;
- Planning targeted strategies and measures for abating greenhouse gas emissions;
- Providing a basis on which to determine levels of achievement;
- Carrying out comparisons with other municipalities or national values;
- Presenting the success of the Climate Alliance as an initiative of many European municipalities.

The question of a uniform standard for CO₂ emissions inventories has been debated frequently within the Climate Alliance. International standards for the inventorisation of greenhouse gas emissions have to be adapted to the preconditions of local authorities, and the different possibilities of small and large municipalities should be addressed adequately. This process shall now be fostered in an international working group.

Further indicators for the area of CO₂ reduction

Even if a CO₂ emissions inventory has been compiled, this does not necessarily satisfy all of the above-mentioned goals of monitoring. This is because CO₂ emissions levels on their own do not necessarily always provide a great depth of information, as a CO₂ emissions inventory does not provide sufficient and transparent information on progress in individual sectors; the range of influence of the local authority is limited, e.g. in many cases the inventory does not or only partially include electricity production; also issues other than CO₂ reduction should be considered, e.g. other risks and environmental impacts, conservation of resources, and long term security of supply.

For these reasons, it would be helpful to use other indicators as well. Particular importance attaches to energy consumption. As this forms the basis of calculating CO₂ emissions (together with the CO₂ emission factors of the individual energy sources), it needs to be

determined in any case. Further indicators including indices comprising several individual values have already been tested in some Member Municipalities. The Climate Alliance working group will rely on their experience.

Other aspects for the area of CO₂ reduction

Baseline year: For some local authorities, in particular those that have joined the Climate Alliance recently, the reference year of 1987 is of no practical use today. For members that have newly joined the Climate Alliance, the available period within which to achieve the Climate Alliance target would be much shorter, if no greenhouse gas abatement measures have previously been taken. - Therefore, it seems to make sense to not only refer to the overall target by the year 2010, but to consider the annual reduction of primary energy consumption or CO₂ emissions as well. The average annual reduction rate corresponding to the target of halving CO₂ emissions in the period between 1987 and 2010 would be 3% per annum. This rate can provide a point of reference independent of the starting year of the municipal climate protection activities. - Furthermore, such an annual target reduction rate can be established for individual consumption sectors and can thus facilitate monitoring in these sectors.

Availability of, and access to data: In the course of the liberalisation of the energy market, it is becoming increasingly difficult for many municipalities to gain access to the data of the energy supply companies. The Climate Alliance will therefore work towards improved access to climate protection relevant information and data.

Indicators for the other fields of action of the Climate Alliance

In addition to the CO₂ reduction target, the member municipalities commit themselves to further objectives, such as dispensing with tropical timber use and co-operating with the indigenous peoples of the tropical rainforests in Amazonia. Meaningful indicators shall therefore be developed for these fields of action, too.

In developing a proposal for this, the international working group can build upon the results of already existing project groups.