

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr von WOGAU, Mr ALBER, Mr FRUH,
Mr HAHN, Mr SCHALL and Mr WAWRZIK

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on the death of trees in the Black Forest

The European Parliament,

whereas

- the death of trees in the Black Forest has now assumed alarming proportions and that if it continues it will not only destroy the recreation area but also jeopardize the basis of existence of many Black Forest holdings,
- it was estimated that in 1978 - quite apart from environmental pollution caused by nitrous oxides, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, heavy metals and dust - precipitations of sulphur dioxide in the countries of the European Community amounted to 5.4 million tonnes. Precipitations of sulphur dioxide alone in the Federal Republic of Germany are estimated at as much as 3.5 million tonnes annually,
- precipitations of sulphur dioxide are not only one of the causes of damage to forests but also pose a threat to cultural monuments of the upper Rhine. Total damage through corrosion to buildings and materials has been estimated by the OECD at between 3 and 5% of the gross national product of the Member States, so that in the Federal Republic of Germany, for instance, this amounts to between 40 and 70 thousand million marks annually,
- as a result of the destruction of firs over approximately the last ten years principally in southern Germany, an area of 100,000 ha out of 160,000 ha of firs were considered damaged in 1982,
- since the beginning of 1982 the destruction as a result of harmful emissions of spruce which are particularly valuable economically has now increased very rapidly in the Black Forest and in the alpine foothills as well, and deciduous trees - in particular beech trees - are also showing signs of damage,
- in the Federal Republic of Germany alone, by mid-1982 a total of 562,000 ha of forests or almost 8% of the total forest area have been damaged as a result of emissions,
- in Baden-Württemberg in the early summer of 1982, 40% of firs and 10% of spruce were deemed to be damaged by emissions. Since then this damage has assumed even greater proportions. The total damage amounts to approximately 200 million marks annually,

- damage to forests in Europe in 1981 and 1982 is already so serious that there is no longer time to wait for scientists to prove beyond doubt the noxious effect of each individual pollutant or combinations of pollutants on the various species of trees,
1. Views the deteriorating state of European forests as an increasingly serious indication of the need to reduce harmful emissions into the environment;
 2. Demands that the measures to be implemented should take into account the transfrontier nature of this phenomenon; the need to reverse a development which has been in progress for several decades must be made clear;
 3. Calls on the Council and Commission to become conscious of the responsibility of the European Communities in combating the causes of the death of forests in the western part of central Europe;
 4. Considers that the Commission of the European Communities should as a matter of urgency immediately develop a concerted European strategy to reduce environmental damage caused by emissions, of which the death of forests is only one symptom;
 5. Calls for a special meeting of the Council to be convened within the shortest possible time after due preparation by the Commission to enable the Community to play an active part in the immediate future by issuing legally binding decisions in conformity with the objectives of the European Treaties;
 6. Urges the Commission, by applying the emergency procedure, immediately to propose directives to the Council aimed at restricting the upper limits of the pollutants responsible for the death of forests to an acceptable level. It is particularly urgent that the Community should fix upper limits of sulphur dioxide in waste gas from power stations at 400 mg per cubic metre. Similar Community measures are also urgently required with regard to nitrous oxides;
 7. Considers it a matter of urgent necessity that the consultation and adoption procedures for Community legal acts to reduce pollutants in the environment should be considerably speeded up. The Commission must shortly make proposals for shortened procedures in particular as regards the conversion of Community law into national law;

8. Calls, furthermore, for an immediate Community programme to examine the complex causal connections between the various pollutants responsible for the death of European forests with the participation of the research projects of the various Member States which have so far been in part uncoordinated;
9. Calls to this end for a research institute on the causes of damage to forests to be set up with financial assistance from the European Community. Considers that the Upper Rhine area would be particularly appropriate as a location for this institute;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission of the European Communities and to the national parliaments and governments of the Member States.

