

Industry Calls for Unrestricted Effort to Curb CO₂ Emissions

Brussels, 19 September 2000: Business and industry leaders have urged government delegates engaged in UN climate change negotiations not to limit the eligibility and use of technologies in the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

Delegates attending last week's climate change preparatory meeting in Lyon, France, were told that many technologies were already available to tackle the problem of greenhouse gas emissions.

Addressing the Lyon meeting on behalf of the global business community, a representative of the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) said those technologies would be available in the future with varying costs, characteristics, applications and prospects for improvement.

In the run-up to the crucial COP 6 climate change conference in The Hague in November, the European Union has proposed a 'positive list' of project types for inclusion under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The list singles out renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and demand management schemes, in an attempt to get CDM projects off to a prompt, "non-controversial" start without political, technical or financial difficulties.

The EU list makes no mention of nuclear energy or major hydro schemes. However, a senior Community official told an industry briefing session in Lyon that the list would not mean that projects not listed would be excluded from the CDM. The EU official pointed out that the list was a proposal open to further negotiation.

The nuclear industry, at an international level, has argued consistently that none of the technologies available should be excluded from the CDM, and that all options should be left open in the international effort to reduce CO₂ emissions.

As nuclear power plants emit virtually no greenhouse or acid rain gases, the industry sees nuclear as part of the solution to the climate change problem, and maintains that countries should not have their energy choices restricted by external political interference at an international level. Several key nations, including the US, Russia and China, take the same view.

As well as opposing restrictions on technologies, business and industry leaders are calling for procedures for the mechanisms to be kept "clear and concise". The UNICE representative told the Lyon meeting: "The more bureaucracy, the slower the approval – the fewer projects."

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