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Tuesday, 28th October 2008

MEPs approve Louis Grech's proposal for Climate Change Fund

Ivan Camilleri, Brussels

The European Parliament's plenary has given its green light to a proposal submitted by Labour MEP Louis Grech which could revolutionise the way the EU tries to curb climate change.

Mr Grech had suggested that the commission study the possibility of creating a Climate Change Fund, drawing billions of euros from a central EU account to sustain climate change initiatives.

The money could be drawn from the Emissions Trading Scheme, which makes companies all over the EU pay for emitting greenhouse gasses. Voting on the EU's 2009 budget, the EP approved the amendments presented by Mr Grech, who argued that cross-border pollution was best managed at supranational level, especially when it came to allocation of resources and support.

Speaking to The Times after the approval of his suggestion, Mr Grech said he was very satisfied the MEPs had agreed with his suggestions.

"Following the EP's approval, the ball is now in the commission's court," he said.

"The EU executive will now have to provide Parliament with a technical report by the end of March to say whether it agrees with the creation of this fund and on how it should be technically set up and managed."

Mr Grech said that, although the EP's vote was a "first step in the right direction", the issue was still a difficult one as it involved money, which was normally intended for member states.

At this stage he was unsure whether his suggestion would eventually materialise but the EP had sent a political signal.

"It will still be difficult, as any other initiative, but you have to start from somewhere and I am very glad we got things moving."

Although it is almost impossible to establish how much money is needed to tackle climate change issues, recent studies have estimated that the EU's share of the cost of implementing climate change would not be less than €60 billion.

Mr Grech's initiative was initially received with scepticism and many MEPs doubted whether consensus would be found between the different political groups in the EP.

However, intense lobbying among the Socialist group led to the approval of Mr Grech's proposal.

"We now have to wait for the Commission's official reaction," Mr Grech said.



Comments

Andrew Sciberras (11 hours, 56 minutes ago)

Well done Mr. Grech. This is a big victory which many skeptics and naysayers were happy to dismiss before it even went to the vote. It may be a feather in Mr. Grech's hat but ultimately it is a victory everybody.

Daniel Abela (13 hours, 6 minutes ago)

Yet another feather in your cap Mr. Grech. Well done on your sterling job and your contribution towards a healthier and cleaner environment. Keep up the good work.

Karl Abela (14 hours, 21 minutes ago)

Well done Mr Grech, you have given a fine example to your leader Dr Muscat of how to contribute towards the country, ie in a pro active manner rather than the traditional make or break labour tactic.

Keep it up!

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