

## **The Lisbon Strategy and environmentally sustainable development - is the EU living up to the demands for environmentally sustainable growth?**

1. In August 2003 the Commission tabled a proposal on the regulation issued by the European Parliament and the Council on limiting emissions to the atmosphere of certain greenhouse gases containing fluorine. The greenhouse gases in question are **HFC** (hydrofluorocarbons), **PFC** (perfluorocarbons), and **SF6** (sulphur hexafluoride). These gases are used in refrigerating and air-conditioning plants, spray cans, the production of foamed plastic, and in some industrial manufacturing processes, and have a strong impact on climatic change. The gases are covered by the Kyoto Protocol.

By signing the Kyoto Protocol, the EU has committed itself to reduce emissions by 8 per cent within the period 2008-2012, which corresponds to 336 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents. **In pursuance of the EU's agreement on the distribution of the burden of reducing emissions, Denmark must reduce its emissions by considerably more, notably 21 per cent.**

The Commission's proposal to limit the greenhouse gases that contain fluorine will be a step in the right direction, but according to opinions in many countries, far from enough and **hardly in harmony with the Lisbon Strategy for sustainable development.**

2. In its first reading of the proposal, the European Parliament tabled a large number of amendments and, by a statutory majority on 14 October 2004, the Council of Ministers for the Environment adopted a common position that approved central points of the Commission's proposal. **Denmark** and Austria voted against the proposal, while Sweden, Portugal, and Belgium abstained from voting.
3. In pursuance of the **Lisbon Strategy**, in March 2000 heads of state and governments agreed that the EU should achieve sustainable economic growth with more jobs and respect for the environment. In this connection **Denmark and Austria prohibited the use of greenhouse gases containing fluorine.** This prohibition comes into force in Denmark in 2006. We will not be content with limiting use, as proposed by the Commission. Denmark will be forced to forbid the use of these gases in order to reduce its emissions by the 21 per cent we are committed to (cf. above).
4. It is well known that the three greenhouse gases (HFC, PFC, and SF6) have an impact on the climate **that is many thousand times greater than that of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).**
5. In pursuance of the Lisbon Strategy and to fulfil the aims of the Kyoto Protocol, industries in the EU have therefore developed technologies **that make the use of the harmful greenhouse gases superfluous.** This has led to both investments and the creation of new jobs, fully in accord with the **Wim Kok Report** regarding how the EU can live up to the Lisbon Strategy.

Accordingly, it is possible to reduce the use of the harmful greenhouse gases with the help of **existing** technology and new investments – which will benefit climatic developments – to a far greater extent than the European Parliament and the Council paved the way for during their first reading of the Commission's proposal. In addition, Denmark risks **increasing** its emissions of these harmful gases by 0.7 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents if the proposal is adopted in its present form.

6. In order to remove these gases Denmark has already invested in a technology that makes it possible to phase out their use.

This means that, in order to achieve the environmental policy goals within the EU, and to fulfil the aims of the Kyoto Accord, fully in harmony with the objectives of the Lisbon process, Danish society has combined innovative new technology with investments and the creation of new jobs with these environmental policy goals.

The consequence of the decision made by the Council of Ministers for the Environment on greenhouse gases where Denmark is concerned is **that this entire effort will be wasted**. In relation to the citizens of Denmark and the rest of Europe, the EU will come to represent a political direction that forbids a country to use the technology developed to benefit employment and the environment, and will make it even more difficult to live up to the Kyoto objectives.

It is quite impossible for **citizens** to understand that the EU can in this way harmonise environmental standards **downwards** in a country solely out of deference to the single market, without taking account of the objectives regarding sustainability, and in conflict with the Lisbon processes.

This will damage the EU's reputation and it will appear to citizens that the EU is failing to live up to its own objectives in this vital area.

7. The Danish government and the Danish Folketing will make every effort to ensure that the Commission's proposal is **tightened up**, both during the second reading in the European Parliament and in the Council, so as to take account of the Danish position, which demands considerably higher reductions of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the future. **But there should also be a significantly higher reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at EU level, both in the light of the Kyoto Protocol and the Lisbon Strategy for sustainable growth.**
8. At the meeting in the Hague from 22-23 November 2004, the **Danish COSAC delegation** will request that COSAC contact EU institutions and explain the necessity of making further reductions in emissions of the greenhouse gases containing fluorine, and the necessity of the EU living up to the Lisbon Strategy on sustainable development.

At a later stage, the Danish Folketing will contact the national parliaments of the other EU Member States to ask for support in amending the decisions of the Council of Ministers for the Environment.