



RESOLUTION

2012

TOPIC: Reduction of Energy Consumption

YPAC 2012
was held in
Liechtenstein
from 6th to
9th March

Dear citizens of our great Alpine Region,

YPAC 2012 was held in Liechtenstein from March 6th to March 9th. The youth parliament is an institution for young people from different Alpine countries to voice their opinions in parliament. This year's topic was the reduction of energy consumption.

The resolution is the final product of the YPAC in which there are 10 postulations included that passed by vote on the last day of the parliament. Therefore they are the most important in the view of the delegates. Some measurements, that are included in the resolution, are in test status or already put in execution in some regions but we demand that these measurements are put into execution all over the Alps. The aim of the Youth parliament is to voice their opinion on this topic.

10 Postulates to Reduce the Energy Consumption in the Alpine area

Postulation 1

Local products and labels

Local products should be subsidized by governments in order to support local economies and reduce unnecessary transport that wastes fuel and increases costs. Additionally consumers should be able to distinguish between non-local products those that are not energy-friendly. By offering a clear differentiation between the transport carbon footprints of the products, consumers could be encouraged to help their local economies. A recognizable colour symbol should be printed on packaging to inform consumers about the eco-friendliness of the product.

If a product is not local it has obviously been transported over long distances which implies excessive, often unnecessary, fuel-consumption that could be avoided.

Postulation 2

Black for green

A huge amount of energy is used for water heating and the energy used for this purpose could be used for something else or even saved, if we heat water some other way. It would

be effective to install black tubular thermal collectors that would absorb solar energy because of their colour and provide households with a complementary means of heating water when the sun is shining. This technology works even in colder periods of the year as tests have shown that water can be heated to up to 60 degrees Celsius even in colder times of the year. The older version of this technology required temperatures above 10 degrees for optimum working but now we have one that creates a vacuum between the liquid and the outer air and therefore does not allow cold air to have an effect on the liquid so technically there could be even minus 20 degrees outside but if the sun is shining, the liquid could be warmed up to 60 or even 70 degrees. So our committee proposes legislation that would require governments or local authorities to offer subsidies to house-owners who decide to heat their water in this way. This action could, to some extent, be a financial burden for authorities, however would still be easily affordable and would be beneficial both for households, as they will spend less money on energy, and for the environment because all energy production interferes in some way with nature and the less we interfere with it, the better it is.

Postulation 3

Transportation law

Governments should pass a law establishing specific days on which fuel-based private transportation is banned in urban areas.

Laws should be passed in order to permit the implementation of energy related awareness days on which private transportation is completely banned in towns and other urban areas (said areas are left at the discretion of the local government). On these days (e.g. once a month) the only traffic allowed inside the town would be emergency vehicles and cheaper and more frequent public means of transportation. Governments could give special permission to vehicles transporting essential products to enter the town only early in the morning (4:00 to 7:00 a.m.)

These days would an excellent opportunity for widespread publicity.

Postulation 4

Housing:

In order to help families financially, we propose a modern strategy to insulate old houses. Other than the fact that they are saving money, they become more energy independent, and resources are getting scarce. One of the best ways to be more efficient is renewing and modernizing the households. We believe that specific companies should take interest in renovating houses that are out of date in energy saving technology.

Insulation program ("Contracting")

1. The companies renovate the insulation systems at their own cost

2. In exchange the house owners keep on paying their usual monthly energy consumption-fee at the level it was before the renovation, even though they are now using less energy. The difference in their bill is given to the company until the expenses of the renovation are paid off

3. After the renovation and a small interest have been fully paid (depending on the enterprises), the private households start saving money.

Geothermal energy

Geothermal energy is one of the most efficient forms of gaining energy.

We believe that the stress-tests that have to be taken before construction begins, should be financed by governments. The expenses will be moderate since one stress-test will cover various properties.

Postulation 5

Utilization of renewable energy sources as a means of decreasing energy consumption and the environmental impacts of public buildings

I. Recovering normally wasted energy for reuse via heat pump and heat exchanger systems

Local governments should adopt wastewater heat recovery systems for the entire region. We endorse the installation of ventilation systems that reuse the energy in the outgoing air, e.g. heat exchangers, on public buildings.

II. Replacing traditional energy sources in order to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels

We recommend buildings are fitted with renewable energy utilizing systems (e.g. solar heating etc.) on the basis of local environmental conditions.

Furthermore we support the installation of the above mentioned systems on existing public buildings. These projects are to be financed in part by the central governments of the countries concerned.

Postulation 6

Tax on excessive energy consumption

We propose a tax on excessive energy consumption. Based on current average European energy use, annual energy consumption should be reduced from 6000 to 4000 watts per person. Use above this limit would be heavily taxed, encouraging all citizens to adopt more conscious and responsible energy use. To prevent the opposition such a tax could cause, a promotional campaign could be launched beforehand to inform citizens of ways they could reduce their energy consumption. Citizens will have the opportunity to be visited by experts who will show them how to optimize their energy use. The experts, financed by the tax money, will then offer another visit to the households still above the 4000 watts limit once the tax has been established.

Postulation 7

More attractive public transport systems

Public transport systems must be improved in order to make people shift from individual to public transport. In consideration of previously analyzed travel behavior these measures must be taken:

- Shorter intervals between rides should be introduced
- Adoption of more means of transport during rush hours
- Expansion of transport network
- Better communication between schools and public transport systems

Implementation of combined tickets:

This means that an agreed percentage of the admission charges for cultural centers and events will be detracted on production of public transport tickets. In turn you will be given a combined ticket which will be valid both for the cultural centers and for the return journey. These measures should be financed by the government.

Postulation 8

All public buildings need to pass the “ESS-Test”.

The “ESS-Test” implies a certain level of energy self-sufficiency and conservation that can be achieved by adopting the following suggestions:

- renewable energy (e.g. use of solar panels)
- proper insulation (e.g. double glazing)
- an ecologically acceptable heating system (e.g. biomass, geothermal heat pumps)
- recyclable and regional building materials (e.g. wood from local forests)
- rainwater reservoirs (e.g. reservoirs for toilets, for gardens)

If a percentage of the conditions defined by an expert-committee is not fulfilled, the new building has to improve its self-sufficiency to be built. Old buildings will have to pass the “ESS-Test”, but with a lower standard. If they don’t pass the test they will have two years to adjust to the standard. Otherwise the building will be forced to be put out of use. All buildings of cultural and historical importance would be excluded from the test.

Postulation 9

Electric Cars

We want to encourage the population and industry to use electric vehicles for medium and short distance journeys.

Lowering costs should be a government’s prime concern. This can be achieved by lower taxation on the electric cars. This financial support would encourage consumers to buy this type of car, thus boosting production in the sector. As well as offering economic help, governments should also increase the number of recharging stations available to the public to ensure adequate service.

Postulation 10

In order to inform students during their education, we would introduce an annual “Green Week”.

The aim of this week would be to raise awareness of energy saving in society. Therefore we believe it is vital to create programs suited to each different age group:

- For kindergarten and primary school students, we suggest a whole week of games and other activities based on energy saving themes.
- By the time they are in secondary school, students should have certain knowledge on the topic of saving energy; in consequence it is not necessary to guide them through the whole week. On the first day they will be given a theme and some general information. During the week they must prepare a project with the support of teachers and experts, while school lessons are carried out as usual. Their work is to be presented at a closing ceremony in front of all school members and their families. Additionally the ceremony will be interactive so that the adults can get involved and possibly participate in various workshops. Optionally the projects could be shown in public and the school could also turn the “Green Week” into a competition.

In this way we hope to inspire future generations and develop a sustainable attitude toward saving energy.