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EU says China to reject any binding emissions pact after Kyoto Protocol expires

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

By HENRY SANDERSON, AP

BEIJING -- China will reject any agreement that calls for binding limits on carbon dioxide emissions that will replace the Kyoto Protocol, an EU official said Wednesday.

Guido Sacconi, chairman of a visiting European Parliament delegation, said that was the impression he got after three days of talks in Beijing with government and environmental officials.

"In the private meetings we have had, particularly with Chinese politicians, there were of course some differences of opinion," Sacconi, who heads the European Parliament's Temporary Committee on Climate Change, told a news conference.

"The main difference is, unlike the European Parliament or the European Union, the Chinese believe that it will not be possible, in the agreement which follows the Kyoto Protocol, for China to accept any binding obligations - this was one difference between us."

The purpose of the committee is to help get developing countries like India and China on board an international climate change treaty, which the European Union supports.

Sacconi's delegation is in China at a critical time. Next month environment ministers from 80 countries

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will meet on Indonesia's Bali island to discuss a replacement for the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

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Under that agreement, nations agreed to cut their carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases to below 1990 levels by 2012, but the U.S. and Australia did not sign up, worried about the effect it would have on their economies.

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This time the U.S. insists that China - which is now the world's biggest emitter of carbon dioxide

英文學習

according to one European study - needs also to be included in the pact. But China, whose staggering

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economic growth has helped lift millions out of poverty, is worried too that binding emissions limits could hinder growth.

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China would be willing to negotiate and make commitments at the Bali talks, the European delegation said, but they weren't certain what those commitments would be.

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Sacconi said the discussions had been fruitful and that China was making efforts to reduce emissions, save energy and use renewable fuels. Politicians were committed to tackling global warming and to international cooperation in the fields of environmental technology and finance, he said.

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The committee is pushing for an international agreement by 2009 that includes emission targets for industrialized countries, transfers of clean technology, and a global "cap-and-trade" system for harmful emissions.

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It wants industrial countries to reduce emissions by at least 30 percent by 2020, and by 60 percent to 80 percent by 2050 compared to levels in 1990.

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