Improving the delivery of benefits from EU environment measures: building confidence through better knowledge and responsiveness

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the own-initiative report by Oreste ROSSI (EFD, IT) on improving the delivery of benefits from EU environment measures: building confidence through better knowledge and responsiveness, and welcomes the Commission Communication on the subject.

It notes the **unsatisfactory level of implementation of environmental law**, which not only harms the environment and human health but also creates uncertainty for industry and places obstacles to the Single Market. The annual cost of non-implementation of EU environmental legislation is currently EUR 50 billion in health costs and direct costs to the environment, rising to EUR 90 billion from 2020 onwards. Members further note that full implementation of EU legislation in the waste sector alone would generate 400 000 jobs and save EUR 72 billion annually.

Observing that the current fragmented state of implementation in Member States increases uncertainty about the exact requirements, and, in so doing, **discourages investments** in those environmental areas which can generate jobs, Members make a series of recommendations and put forward solutions to assure a more efficient implementation. In particular, they note that much of the **unnecessary administrative costs** linked to environmental legislation are due to inadequate or inefficient public and private administrative practices in various Member States. The committee recommends:

- **dissemination of best practices** between Member States, and between the regional and local authorities that are responsible for implementing EU legislation, as well as through greater cooperation with the European Institutions;
- **improving data** on compliance and enforcement work;
- the setting up of a **user-friendly website** where the most recent indicator measurements would be available and where informal comparisons among the Member States would be possible;
- the setting up of a systematic and easily accessible **online information tool** on implementation;
- involving **citizens** in the implementation process, in a structured way;
- the pooling of knowledge between the respective **judicial systems** of Member States that deal with infringements of EU environmental legislation;

It calls on the Commission to:

- explore the possibility of setting up **partnership implementation agreements** between the Commission and individual Member States, or between Member States, in order to promote better implementation;

- examine whether **greater participation by local authorities** throughout the process of defining environmental policy would be useful;

- re-consider demands for the introduction of a **best-practise database**, and explore ways in which information and communication technology can be deployed to provide as much useful online information as possible on how EU environmental law should be implemented;

- create a **complaint unit** where citizens can communicate problems related to the implementation of environmental legislation;

- set up an **Environmental Law Inspection Unit**, whose role will be to oversee and assist in the implementation of the environmental legislation.

Lastly, Member States are asked to advance further the proper implementation of EU environmental legislation and adopted policies and strategies in the framework of the 7th Environment Action Programme, and to ensure adequate capacity and finances for their full implementation, even in times of austerity.