Implementation of the 7th environment action programme

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the own-initiative report by Daciana Octavia SÂRBU (S&D, RO) on the implementation of the 7th Environment Action Programme.

As a reminder, the 7th Environment Action Programme ("7th EAP") sets legally binding targets in the areas of environment and climate change to be achieved by 2020. It also presents a long-term vision for 2050.

Members considered that the 7th EAP has added value and a positive influence on environmental policies at EU and Member State level. While noting that there is general support for an 8th EAP, the report stresses that there is there is still **great potential for improvement** and called on the Commission and the competent authorities in the Member States for **increased political will at the highest level to implement the 7th EAP.**

Members made the following **recommendations** to Member States and the Commission:

- assess their **progress** towards the objectives of the 7th EAP and to reorient their actions where necessary;
- ensure that any new **legislative proposals** fully implement the objectives and measures of the7th EAP;
- ensure the active inclusion of **civil society organisations** in the assessment of the implementation of EU environmental legislation;
- close **knowledge gaps** in the following areas: environmental thresholds (tipping points), the circular economy paradigm, the combined effects of chemicals, nanomaterials, hazard identification methods, the impacts of micro plastics, the interaction between systemic risks and other health determinants, soil and land use and invasive alien species;
- quickly and definitively to abandon environmentally harmful **subsidies;**
- coordinate efforts to promote the development and validation of alternative methods to animal testing;
- improve the **pesticide** authorisation system in the EU;
- step up the full implementation of the EU **Biodiversity Strategy**;
- make greater efforts to preserve the use and integrity of **fresh water reserves**, and remedy as a matter of priority the poor state of surface waters;
- ensure the full implementation of **air quality** legislation, especially in urban areas: creation of low-emission areas, promotion of carpooling facilities and services, gradual elimination of preferential tax treatment for highly polluting vehicles, introduction of "mobility budgets".

Members called for the **issue of implementation** to feature as a recurring item in trio-Presidency priorities and programmes, that it be discussed at the Environment Council at least once a year, perhaps through a dedicated Implementation Council.

Urging further reform of the CAP, the report underlined the need for a **smart agricultural policy** with strong commitment to deliver public goods and ecosystem services related to soil, water, biodiversity, air quality, climate action and the provision of landscape amenities. Members called for an integrated, where the granting of support to the agricultural sector is linked to both food security and the delivery of environmental outcomes.

The Commission was called upon to:

- significantly improve the volume, use and administration of **EU funds** for the EAP's objectives;
- develop, without delay, a comprehensive, overarching framework strategy on the implementation of the sustainable development goals (**SDGs**) in the EU;
- **guarantee the enforcement of existing EU law** and ensure Member States' full compliance with the objectives of 7th EAP by utilising all tools at its disposal, e.g. infringement procedures.

Members called on the next Commission to dedicate a priority area of the next legislative term to sustainable development, environmental and climate protection in general and the objectives of the 7th EAP and a forthcoming 8th EAP.