Implementation of the 7th environment action programme

2017/2030(INI) - 17/04/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 583 votes to 35, with 68 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the Seventh Environmental Action Programme (EAP).

As a reminder, the 7th EAP sets legally binding objectives in the fields of environment and climate change to be achieved by 2020. It also sets out a long-term vision for 2050.

Main conclusions: Members recognised the added value of the 7th EAP and its positive influence on environmental policies at EU and Member State level. Acknowledging the general support for an 8th EAP, Parliament nevertheless highlighted the many opportunities for **improvement**. It therefore invited the Commission and the competent authorities of the Member States to **strengthen, at the highest level, the political will to implement the 7th EAP**.

Members stressed that the objectives of the 7th EAP are minimum targets and that considerable additional efforts are needed to **achieve the aims of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs). They called on the Commission to prepare a mid-century zero emissions strategy for the EU.

Parliament expressed concerned that **specialised knowledge and scientific evidence** are not always appropriately considered in policy-making or transferred to the parties responsible for implementation. It highlighted the examples of bioenergy, palm oil, plant protection products, endocrine disrupters, food production and consumption, GMOs, air and noise pollution, and urban food waste. It invited the Commission to immediately revise the Regulation on cosmetic products with regard to endocrine disrupters.

Members deplored the **lack of progress** in developing a European strategy for a non-toxic environment, the lack of integration of environmental concerns into other policy areas or the persistence of shortcomings in urban waste water treatment in several EU regions. They also acknowledged that the **CAP** increasingly takes environmental aspects into account, but continues to present challenges to achieving the EAP’s objectives.

Recommendations: Member States and the Commission were called on to:

- 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.

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.

Parliament 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.