Noise pollution: future policy. Green paper

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The Committee endorses the Commission's plan for a framework directive on measurement and assessment of noise pollution. However, it criticizes the Commission's announcement that the establishment of target values and measures for their implementation is postponed until a "later stage". It points out that, according to the principle of prevention, such target values are urgently necessary for the priority areas of protection against noise, and should not now be put off to some distant future. The Commission's proposal for greater use of economic instruments in noise abatement is acceptable to the Committee; however, the Committee opposes the use of fiscal measures as a kind of "punishment" of those responsible for noise or as a source of public revenue. The Committee also points out that economic instruments are not a substitute for the adoption of provisions on emission limit values. Finally, the ESC urgently recommends that research and development work in the Community should focus on noise abatement, and that efforts be made to improve coordination and concentration.