Restriction of the use of petroleum products in power stations (repeal. direct. 75/405/EEC)

1996/0175(CNS) - 27/11/1996 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Committee welcomes the repeal proposals contained in the Commission communication. At the same time, it would wish to make a number of comments and recommendations which deal more specifically with the two fields concerned. Firstly and most importantly, no political progress has been made in the area of legislation on oil and crisis measures during the last twelve months. Since this area of energy policy dates back a long way, a special effort is needed to bring it up to date, rationalize it and adjust it to the new European and international context. The Committee notes the renewed commitment on the part of the Commission to present a communication on this subject in 1997, and very much hopes that it will be supported by new proposals that take the directions outlined in both this and its previous opinion. Concerning legislation on energy efficiency, the Committee returns to the question - raised in its previous opinion - of the Commission's maintenance of Directive 78/170/EEC. This earlier opinion took the view that the Commission's reasons for retaining the directive were inadequate, particularly since the Commission itself drew attention to the original shortcomings of the Directive and its subsequent patchy implementation by the Member States. As the Commission has not supplied the additional information which it had requested, the Committee calls on the Commission to present a report justifying the implementation of this directive and - if its maintenance is merited in terms of Community added value - to present proposals ensuring that it is applied uniformly in all Member States. The Committee concludes by welcoming the Commission's intention of making a study of existing Community legislation every two years. In order to make this exercise as useful and relevant as possible, the Committee would however also suggest that any new proposal be backed up by an impact form, following the example of what is done for SMEs. Here the Committee would recall that it has also already suggested that, where appropriate, all new legislation should include provisions repealing existing legislation which is thereby rendered obsolete. As well as helping to rationalize Community legislation (and this is the aim of these reviews), such a move would also make Community activity in the energy field clearer and more consistent.