Air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions: European climate change programme, ECCP

2000/2103(COS) - 08/03/2000 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: To outline the EU policies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the framework of a European Climate Change Programme (ECCP). CONTENT: In view of respecting the commitments undertaken by the EU at the Kyoto conference, action - both at Member state and Community level- will have to be reinforced. In order to do so, the Commission will follow a twin-track approach: the reinforcement of Community-wide policies and the development of emissions trading system within the EU to enhance the cost effectiveness of the EU's implementation strategy, including the preparation for the use of the Kyoto Protocol's flexible mechanisms. A strengthening of common and co-ordinated policies and measures for all major greenhouse gas emitting sectors will be facilitated through the integration of environmental aspects into sector policies such as those for energy, transport, agriculture, industry, internal market and development, where strategies are being developed. In addition, the European Council in its conclusions of October 1999, urged the Commission to put forward a list of priority action to climate change as early as possible in 2000 and to prepare appropriate proposals in due course. In response to these requests, the Commission is now putting forward a list of proposed common and co-ordinated policies and measures. The list is not exhaustive but rather focusus primarily on priority actions in the energy, transport, and industry sector. It could be adjusted however, following discussions in Council and EP and decisions taken concerning different sector policies such as those for energy, transport, industry and agriculture. The main objective of the ECCP to be initiated by the Commission is to identify and develop all those elements of a European Climate Change strategy that are necessary for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. Through a co-operative effort of all relevant stakeholders such as representatives of the Commission, the Member states, industry and the NGO community, the programme will undertake preparatory work for the Commission to propose in due course concrete policy proposals to Council and the EP. In order to launch the programme, a Steering Committee will be set up, comprising all Commission services that take part in the ECCP. It should be responsible for the overall management and co-ordination of the ECCP both in terms of policy approach and organisation. The Committee will create working groups on specific problem areas and will decide on their terms of reference and timetable on the basis of a proposal by the relevant Directorates General. THe working groups (WGs) will work to an agreed timetable. Main elements of the work programmes will include assessments of the environmental and cost implications of policies and measures as well as their compatability with the sector integration policies. On the basis of these assessments, policy recommendations can be made to the Commission. Each WG will have its specific 'set of stakeholders' representing a European rather than a national or regional clientele. The WGs will have a limited size and will consist of approximately 15 persons. Finally, each WG will regularly report to the Commission through its chairperson. A written interim report will berequested after 6 months and a final report after 2 months. The final report will propose policy-oriented conclusions outlining the nature, scope and content of the policies and measures to be considered at Community level. On this basis, the Commission will be in a position to prepare concrete policy proposals containing instruments such as technical regulation, voluntary agreements or flexible mechanisms.