Environment: 6th Community action programme 2001-2010

2001/0029(COD) - 24/01/2001 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to present a proposal for a Council Decision laying down the Community Environment Action Programme 2001-2010. CONTENT: The Community's 5th environmental action programme 'Towards Sustainability' ended in 31.12.2000 having delivered a number of important improvements. However, a number of serious environmental problems persist and require further action. Against this background, the proposed environment action programme establishes the environmental priorities for a Community response, covering a ten year time period to allow sufficient time for identification of new measures, implementation and evaluation of their effects. The overall aims and objectives of the proposed programme are as follows: - the objectives and priorities set out are based on an assessment of the state and trends of the environment and the identification of those persistent environmental problems that require a lead from the Community; - it shall faciliate the integration of environmental protection requirements into other Community policies while, at the same time, ensuring that measures proposed and adopted in favour of the environment take account of the objectives of the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development, full consideration of all options and instruments, as well as being based on extensive dialogue and sound science; - it aims at stabilising the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases at a level that will not cause unnatural variations of the earth's climate. This will require making progress towards the long-term requirement established by the Intergovernmental panel on climate change to reduce emissions of greenhouses gases by 70% over 1990 levels: - to protect and restore the funtioning of natural systems and halting the loss of bio-diversity both in the European Union and on a global scale; - to target man-made contaminents that give rise to significant impacts on, or unacceptable risks to, human health; - other aims and objectives relate to better resource efficiency and waste management, sustainable development in candidate countries, a global partnership and an integrated dialogue. The means to achieve stratgies approaches include the following: more effecive implementation of Community legislation on the environment; integration of environmental protection requirements into the definition of all Community policies and activities; promoting the polluter pay principle; promoting partnership and co-operation with enterprises and their representative bodies; to ensure that consumers are better informed; to support environmental integration in the financial sector; to create a Community liability regime; to promote better understanding of environmental issues and finally, more effective land use planning and management decisions. In addition, the objectives on climate change shall be pursued inter alia, meeting the targets of the Kyoto Protocol and second, preparing for measures aimed at adaptation to the consequences of climate change.