Environment and development: production, trade and consumption of greener products. Green Paper

2001/2117(COS) - 07/02/2001 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: To present a Commission White Paper on integrated product policy. CONTENT: This Green Paper proposes a strategy to strengthen and refocus product-related environmental policies to promote the development of a market for greener products. The ideas put forward are intended to stimulate public discussion on the proposed strategy and its elements, the propects openend up for stakeholders and government in the greening of products, and on the practical means for implementing and promoting it. The strategy is based on the Integrated Product Policy (IPP) approach and intends to complement existing environmental policies by using so far untapped potential to improve a broad range of products and services throughout their life cycle from the mining of raw materials to production, distribution, use and waste manangement. Its central element is the question how the development of greener products and their uptake by consumers can be achieved most efficiently. Hence, there is no single preferred instrument of IPP. Rather, there will be a mix of instruments which needs to be carefully used and fine-tuned to ensure a maximum effect. The Integrated Product Policy approach and its focus on the life cycle of products combined with a strong stakeholder co-operation to identify eco-efficient solutions both for the environment and business development will be a major innovative element of the 6th Environment Action Programme. Through using the synergies of environmental improvement and business development, it can also contribute to the goals of Sustainable Development Strategy currently being prepared by the European Commission for the Gothenburg Summit.