Excise duties, mineral oils: taxation of aircraft fuel

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The committee adopted the report by José Manuel GARCÍA-MARGALLO Y MARFIL (EPP-ED, E) which broadly endorsed the measures proposed by the Commission, although it pointed out that the Commission should have analysed the environmental impact of a tax on aircraft fuel in greater detail. The committee recognised that, for economic reasons, it would not currently be feasible for the Community as a whole to introduce taxation of aviation fuel targeting exclusively intra-EU flights operated by Community air carriers. It welcomed the Commission's recommendation that Member States should be permitted to levy tax on aviation fuel for domestic flights or, via bilateral agreements, intra-EU flights. The committee called for immediate measures to reduce the environmental impact of aviation and to create a more level playing field by making aviation subject to the same 5% greenhouse gas emission reduction targets as other sectors under the Kyoto treaty. An environmental charge should be introduced on flights to and from EU airports. The Council was urged to ensure that a compromise was reached on the treatment of aviation fuel at the 33rd ICAO Conference in 2001. If no satisfactory measures were taken at that conference, the Commission should put forward proposals for internal EU measures. The committee felt that, in any case, the Commission should undertake a study analysing alternative solutions to reducing CO2 emissions from air transport, such as emissions trading schemes, research into technological improvement of engines and fuel and better management of air traffic.