Undertakings: corporate social responsibility, integration of social and environment. Green Paper

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The committee adopted the report by Richard HOWITT (PES, UK) welcoming the Commission's Green Paper. The report focused on certain priorities for corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the Community context: social and environmental reports, the creation of a European platform for CSR, the role of stakeholders and the mainstreaming of CSR issues in the Union's internal and external policies. MEPs were in favour of a voluntary approach, but nevertheless emphasised the need to have some binding rules. The committee said that each area of CSR required its own approach: for example, the environmental practices of European companies should be subject to rules comparable to those on competition. In addition, the annual reports on social and environmental impacts should be independently verified and include all levels of a company, its supply chain and business partners. The committee proposed the creation of an EU multi-stakeholder CSR platform made up of representatives of business, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, public authorities and representatives of non-EU countries. This body could register voluntary codes of conduct in order to verify them in the light of international standards and devise guidelines for wider stakeholder dialogue. In addition, the committee said that companies should be required to supply information on the social and environmental impact of their operations.