

Energy efficiency in the Community: strategy for the rational use of energy

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Member States should commit themselves to binding national overall targets for improving energy efficiency and draw up guidelines by energy type and economic sector, according to the report adopted by the Committee, in which Mr STOCKMANN (PSE,D) examines the Commission Communication on energy efficiency in the European Community. According to the report, the current annual improvement in energy efficiency of 0.6% is not enough to achieve the targets agreed in Kyoto. Annual efficiency gains of 2.5% by 2010 would be required instead. The Commission is called upon to start, by the end of 2001, to evaluate national plans for energy savings at three-yearly intervals and to encourage Member States to initiate additional activities and information campaigns aimed mostly at young people. The committee welcomes the Commission's intention to develop guidelines for the renovation of existing buildings with the aim of increased energy efficiency and calls once again on the Commission to put forward firm proposals for an EU-wide energy tax. Greater consideration should be given to the energy efficiency dimension in transport planning and the regulations governing agricultural, Structural and Cohesion Funds should be supplemented by directives to promote increased energy efficiency. Finally, energy efficiency should be treated as a priority in future budgetary procedures and sufficient resources - at least equivalent to those originally proposed by the Commission for the SAVE II programme - should be set aside for implementing the Union's strategy in this area.