Community energy policy: strengthening environmental integration

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The Committee acknowledges the Commission'endeavours to strengthen environmental integration into Community energy policy. It recognises however that responsibility for energy policy lies primarily with Member States. The committee is therefore calling upon Council to agree on a clear strategy at Community level which sets out priorities as to how it intends to promote further integration of environmental objectives into energy policy. Member States are urged to integrate the environmental dimension into their energy policy at local and regional level. To help measure the progress made, the Commission is called upon, in collaboration with Member States, to identify the best indicators of integrating environmental objectives within energy policy. The Energy Committee recommends the use of annual indicators, based on the type of activity and the country to measure contributions to the reduction of CO2 emissions. It also stresses the need for follow-up of national strategies and measures to promote the use of renewable energies, energy efficiency and co-generation of heat and electricity. The above views are expressed in the report by Mr CHICHESTER (EPP,UK), which was adopted by the Energy Committee in response to the Commission·s communication reviewing the overall progress of actions in integrating environmental considerations into energy policy. The committee further calls on the Commission to carry out a study on how much various types of energy to the emission of greenhouse gases in the EU. Although the Commission made no mention of nuclear energy, the majority of committee members expressed themselves in favour of maintaining the nuclear-generated share of electricity supply as a means of helping the EU achieve its target of CO2 emission reduction. Among possible technologies for reducing CO2 concentrations in the atmosphere, the Commission is asked to assess the possibility of separating and storing CO2 in empty, former oil-bearing geological structures. Finally, the committee emphasises the importance of increasing public awareness of the environmental dimension of energy, calls for close coordination between environment, energy and research policies in the implementation of the 5th RTD Framework Programme, and recognises that the Structural Funds have a part to play in supporting specific projects.