Economic growth and environment

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The proposal for a resolution was unanimously approved. While acknowledging the novelty of the communication in question, it did draw attention to its limitations - for example when speaking about the need to preserve the environment in the long term, whereas the principle of sustainability called for these measures to be taken in the short term. The Commission should develop a range of economic and fiscal instruments and set a timetable for their implementation, without neglecting the use of legislation and information. On a fiscal level, and given the inadequacy of the Council's approach (which was for postponing the introduction of practical measures, such as a European tax on CO2), concrete models should be put forward for a regulatory energy tax, which would have a beneficial impact on employment. Other market-based measures should also be contemplated, beginning with the abolition of hidden subsidies (such as the non-taxation of kerosene), together with related measures to offset the heavy burden borne by certain sectors and regions. The rapporteur would like to see the Commission take steps to set up regional advisory services for environmentally-minded businesses. As regards employment, it has been adequately demonstrated that a non-sustainable economy leads to job losses, and this includes sensitive areas such as fishing and agriculture. On the other hand, the ecotechnology sector offers an undeniable competitive advantage and it was up to the Commission to promote it. In short, the message which the Committee on the Environment has made its own is that of future well-being and prosperity, conditions which are no longer linked directly to material wealth.