Environment: implementation of the Community law

1996/2217(COS) - 20/03/1997

The Committee has adopted the report by Mr Ken COLLINS (PES, UK) on implementing Community environmental law. The Committee followed the rapporteur unanimously in his conclusion that environmental protection remains a highly contested area, despite the fact that over 200 legal instruments for the protection of the environment have been adopted. In 1995, 265 suspected breaches of Community environmental law have been notified. Said Mr COLLINS: 'Noting the succession of EP reports highlighting the hindrances to effective environmental legislation, it should be emphasized that the EU's inability to ensure effective enforcement of legislation bodes ill for the Community's credibility in all policy areas'. The rapporteur underlined the public's role. 'Without the public, there can be no adequate environmental protection'. The Committee is calling on the Commission: - to bring forward within the lifetime of this Parliament legislation requiring each member state to have an environmental inspectorate, established on the basis of best available practice and subject to monitoring and oversight by the Commission, which should also issue guidelines for the member states on the transposition of all Community environmental legislation and - to introduce a legislative proposal on access to justice giving individuals and organisations extensive rights of legal standing before their national courts in the case of alleged breaches of environmental legislation.