Atmospheric pollution, CO_2 and greenhouse gas emissions: monitoring mechanism (amend. Decision 93/389/EEC)

1996/0192(SYN) - 22/07/1997

The Committee voted to beef up the requirements proposed by the Commission for monitoring greenhouse gases responsible for global warming. The Commission is proposing to update Decision 93 /389/EEC which set up a mechanism essentially for monitoring Community emissions of CO2.The purpose of the new proposal is to extend monitoring beyond the year 2000 and take greater account of other greenhouse gases, such as methane and nitrous oxide, arising from human activities. Adopting a report by Mr James FITZSIMONS (UFE, IRL) amending the proposal , the committee emphasized that monitoring was essential for assessing progress towards Community commitments. The EU is committed to stabilizing CO2 emissions at 1990 levels by 2000. It is also hoping to persuade other countries attending a climate change conference in Kyoto in December to agree a 15% reduction in emissions involving a basket of greenhouse gases between 1990 and 2010. The committee voted to include target dates after 2000 in the decision instead of leaving the timetable vague as the Commission had proposed. Introducing a new passage, the committee also wanted Member States to report each year on the cumulative emissions of each greenhouse gas since 1990. They should also report on the projected cumulative emissions of each greenhouse gas for each year over the periods up to 2005, 2010 and 2020. Cumulative monitoring is needed because otherwise a country's emissions could be excessive throughout a period but lowered during the last year or two just in time to meet the target. Moreover, it is easier to determine whether targets are being achieved using a "gas by gas" approach rather than the all-in "basket" method. The committee thought that the Commission, for its part, should take further steps to ensure the comparability and transparency of national measurement and compilation methods, develop common guidelines and report annually to Parliament and the Council. Member States which failed to provide the data they were supposed to should be singled out.