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

1996/0192(SYN) - 02/02/1999

Weasel words such as "as far as possible" or "to the extent possible" were weeded out by the Committee from a proposal to tighten the monitoring of greenhouse gases reponsible for global warming. Adopting a recommendation by James FITZSIMONS (UFE, IRL), the committee struck out the offending language, intended to water down commitments, from the common position of the Council on a monitoring mechanism. The aim of the proposal is to extend monitoring beyond the year 2000 and take greater account of greenhouse gases other than CO2. The committee was pleased that the Council had gone some way towards meeting the wishes expressed by Parliament at its first reading in 1997. Thus, the common position accepted that monitoring was essential in assessing progress towards Community commitments. In the aftermath of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the EU committed itself to stabilizing CO2 emissions at 1990 levels by 2000. At a follow-up conference in Kyoto in 1997, it also undertook to reduce a basket of greenhouse gases, including CO2, to 8% of their 1990 levels by 2008/2012. In addition, as the committee pointed out in an amendment yesterday, "demonstrable progress" has to be made by 2005. Among other amendments retabled, one requires 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. The committee also thinks that the Commission should take further steps to "ensure" (not simply "promote", as the Council had suggested) the comparability and transparency of national inventories and reporting. Member States which fail to provide the required data should be singled out.