Air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions: European climate change programme, ECCP

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The committee adopted the report by Jorge MOREIRA DA SILVA (EPP-ED, P) on the Commission communication on EU policies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The report welcomed the Commission's plan for progress towards a European Climate Change Programme (ECCP) but stressed the need for the speedy introduction of legally binding measures to oblige Member States to keep to their quotas. The Commission was urged to put forward a draft directive as soon as possible after the meeting of the 6th Conference of Parties (COP-6) to the Kyoto Protocol (due to take place at The Hague in November 2000) providing for sanctions to be imposed in cases where emission quotas were exceeded. The committee also compared the communication unfavourably with the more ambitious Green Paper on emissions trading within the EU, which was submitted at the same time. The communication, it said, amounted to little more than an organisation chart for the ECCP and a strategically weak list of policies and measures, with the result that the latter were being relegated to an unacceptably insignificant role in the EU's greenhouse gas emission abatement strategy. Moreover, the ECCP itself had been defined merely as a consultative body and not as a strategically oriented policy tool. It therefore called on the Commission to complete the ECCP and come forward with specific proposals for the implementation of policies and measures, within six months after the COP-6 meeting. The committee also felt that the greenhouse problem should be included in the current assessment of the CAP and called for agriculture to be included in the Climate Change Programme. It also reiterated its view that there should not only be a world-wide limit on emissions but also a global 50% ceiling on the use of the flexible mechanisms provided for in the Kyoto Protocol. Lastly, it believed that the Protocol should be ratified under the assent procedure, provided that COP-6 produced a result acceptable to the EU.