Environment: 6th Community action programme 2001-2010

2001/0029(COD) - 14/05/2001

The committee adopted the report by Riitta MYLLER (PES, FIN) amending the proposed Environment Action Programme under the codecision procedure (1st reading). The large number of amendments adopted sought to pin the programme down to specific objectives and a firm timetable for achieving them. The committee endorsed the Commission's four priority areas but wanted to make the programme more strategic, with compulsory thematic programmes, as well as including long-term goals that would reach beyond 2010. It also wanted the programme to form the environmental pillar of the EU's sustainable development strategy to be adopted at the Gothenburg summit in June. The committee called for the programme to pay much greater attention to enlargement, which would be taking place during the period in question. One of the amendments adopted sought to include the candidate countries in the Natura 2000 nature conservation network. Other amendments called for: the EU to take the lead in international environmental policy; ratification of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change in 2002; EU funding for third-world countries to develop sustainable development programmes; and the protection of "hotspots" in developing countries. The committee also said that the Common Agricultural Policy review in 2003 must enhance rural development and environmentally sound farming. The food industry must guarantee quality products and labelling and monitoring of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) must be strengthened. The implementation of environmental legislation must be improved, with penalties imposed on recalcitrant Member States, backed up with a policy of "name, shame and fame" to encourage compliance. The committee wanted to involve local communities and business in environmental policy and find ways of changing consumer behaviour. It also proposed a green-energy label by 2005 and cross-border green belts, an integrated urban environment strategy, the development of public transport, stringent noise, air and water pollution limits, action to reduce electro-magnetic pollution and reduce dumping of waste at sea and measures to reduce the environmental damage caused by tourism.