Environment: 6th Community action programme 2001-2010

2001/0029(COD) - 18/12/2001

The committee adopted the report by Riitta MYLLER (PES, FIN) amending the Council's common position under the codecision procedure (2nd reading). Although it was pleased that Council had taken on board many of Parliament's amendments adopted at 1st reading, it tabled a large number of amendments, some of which were reinstated from 1st reading, calling for tougher action on pesticides, exposure to dangerous chemicals, reduction of greenhouse gases and noise pollution. The committee wanted greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced from 1990 levels by 1% a year until 2020, the share of combined heat and power to be doubled to 18% of total electricity generation by 2010 and exposure to hazardous chemicals to be eliminated by 2020. It also said that levels of waste should be cut by a fifth from 2000 levels over the programming period and the number of people affected by noise should be reduced by at least 10% by 2010 and 20% by 2020. Legislation to implement the EU's new chemicals policy should be in place by 2004. An amendment calling for subsidies that have "significant negative impacts on the environment" to be eliminated by 2005 was also adopted. Another key point was the deadline for developing the "thematic strategies" - the committee called for a time-limit of 3 years after the programme was adopted, rather than the Council's preferred deadline of 5 years. It also wanted the strategies to be adopted using the codecision procedure, thereby ensuring that Parliament and Council were fully involved. Another of the committee's concerns was to ensure that voluntary agreements had a legal framework which would enable Parliament and Council to play a role in determining the objectives and would contain effective monitoring mechanisms. Lastly, it called on the Commission to propose legislation on environmental damage by the beginning of 2002.