Energy : European strategy for the security of supply. Green Paper

2001/2071(COS) - 16/10/2001

The committee adopted the report by Giles Bryan CHICHESTER (EPP-ED, UK) responding to the Commission Green Paper on energy supply. It said that the EU had plenty of opportunities to conduct an energy policy of its own despite the absence of a separate energy chapter in the Treaty. Such a policy should consist in liberalising the energy industry, promoting a level playing-field, promoting the use of renewable energy sources and monitoring implementation of the Kyoto agreements at EU level, research and development in the energy field, promoting an EU policy for energy-saving and safeguarding security of supply. MEPs called on the Member States to include in the EC Treaty an Energy Policy chapter at the next IGC. This would pave the way for a more systematic and long-term approach to energy, with the declared priority being efficient use of energy. As for concrete measures, the committee said that the EU must curb demand for oil in the transport sector, with incentives for the production of a new efficient engine · the 1 litre car · and shifting the emphasis from road and air to rail and ship. The Member States should be encouraged to promote more integrated regional and town planning. These actions should be combined with the development of alternative fuels like biofuels and hydrogen based on renewables. MEPs also stressed that the development of new clean coal technologies had significant commercial export potential and should not be neglected. The committee also recognised that nuclear energy would play a less significant role following decisions to phase it out in five Member States. Another area to develop was local energy production, particularly combined heat and power production (CHP). In view of the fact that total world energy consumption had grown by 46.1% over 25 years and that EU consumption was projected to grow by another 22% in the period 1990 to 2020, MEPs insisted that reducing the demand for end energy and improving energy efficiency was the best way to reduce Europe's external energy dependency. Taxation could have an important part to play in influencing behaviour patterns, but this should be applied to carbon emissions and other pollutants rather than energy production itself.