Economic growth and environment

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The purpose of the Commission communication is to analyse the consequences of the principle of environmentally sustainable growth for the purpose of drawing up economic and fiscal policies in Europe. The Commission feels that a number of specific measures could be adopted in order to facilitate the development of efficient economic policies which promote environmentally-friendly sustainable growth. The following measures deserve particular attention: - transforming the principle of sustainable development into a more tangible, quantifiable concept (improving statistics, "eco-accounting"); - ensuring that the integration of environmental policies into other areas of action depends where possible on market forces; this strategy could help with deregulation and with reducing the administrative interference which sometimes hampers the play of market forces; - this objective of "integration" implies examining the environmental implications of taxation systems and guaranteeing existing tax incentives; - new environmental taxation would be an important element in the new approach based on "integration"; - current taxation and social security systems would need to be revised for economic and employment-related reasons. In addition, the new strategy would imply introducing environmental taxes to correct external effects on the environment in certain cases. This coincidence should be exploited in order to achieve synergisms; - achieving a wide consensus between the public authorities, employers and salaried employees on the policies to be implemented.