Environment and development: common platform for EU preparation for UN session, June 1997

1996/2229(COS) - 14/03/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Lone DYBKJAER (ELDR, D) Parliament considered that the main objective of the forthcoming conference was an improved partnership between rich and poor countries. According to Parliament the biggest problem was the lack of political and financial commitment by the rich countries with regard to the environment which is reflected in their excessive level of consumption and their failure to honour their pledge at Rio on the transfer of additional resources to the developing countries. Considering the Council statement to be inadequate, Parliament considered that the Union's main contribution should be to integrate environmental protection into all policy areas and to realign consumption. It drew particular attention to information for citizens concerning the adverse effects of consumption on the environment. Stressing that rich countries must transfer more relevant technology, in particular by encouraging EU companies to practise the same environmental standards abroad as at home, Parliament called for strengthening of the environmental component of all Union development aid (greening). It also considered that it ought to be associated with the conference with equivalent status to the Commission delegation or at least the same status as it has enjoyed at summits such as Marrakesh (1994) or Singapore (1996). Believing that international environmental legislation should be more binding, it considered that the EU's common platform at the Conference should be more far-reaching than that planned by the Council. It therefore called on the Commission and the Council to advocate the following principles: - all further post-Rio commitments should be formally enshrined in a legally binding Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) covering at least the period from 2000 to 2010; - these commitments should include, inter alia, the establishment of an absolute maximum limit on global greenhouse gases (GHG) concentrations of more than 550 ppmv CO2 equivalent, a designated date by which emissions standstill will be reached on an equitable basis and a common roll-back commitment thereafter; - these commitments should be implemented in accordance with a basic emissions limit set at a level for each country consistent with GHG concentrations of not more than 350 ppmv CO2 (the Green Box), a global reserve bank of emissions rights that shall not exceed 200 gigatonnes for the duration of the MEA (the Blue Box) and penalties for emissions exceeding the Green and Blue Box allocations (the Red Box); - the rules and procedures for the application of these principles would be agreed by 31 December 1999. Lastly, it considered it to be of the utmost importance that the rich countries increase their transfer of capital to developing countries so as to boost sustainable development. Lastly, it called on: - the Commission to present a Green Paper on fair and sustainable trade which includes the idea of border tax adjustments, - the Council to ensure that the Conference's general conclusions take the form of a specific action and objective-oriented declaration containing a commitment to holding a further summit in five years' time; - the Member States to take radical action to stabilize CO2 emissions (in particular by an increase in energy tax).