Environment: soil protection, thematic strategy

2002/2172(COS) - 19/11/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Cristina Gutierrez CORTINEZ on the Commission Communication on thematic strategy for soil protection. Parliament called on the Commission to present, by July 2004, the thematic strategy for soil protection which should geared to the following: - putting an end to the accumulation in soil of substances which pose an environmental and health hazard; - reversing the alarming trend towards erosion, compaction and sealing, the removal and contamination of soil; - protecting soil in its role in storing CO2, securing water resources and preserving biodiversity; - protecting soil for the sustainable production of food and renewable resources. It asked the Commission to do the following: - to draw up a scientific soil catalogue which should include the nature of the soil, its biography, health and vulnerability, degradation and erosion processes and contaminated areas, recognising the existence of high-value soils (in terms of agriculture, geology, ecology, history or the countryside) and the need to draw up recommendations for their conservation and sustainable use. Parliament emphasized the importance of harmonising analytical methods to obtain comparable soil data; - to establish, when the scientific soil catalogue is drawn up, a link between soil protection and soil use, since any scientific and taxonomic classification of soil, would be less effective without the creation of mechanisms for the constant surveillance of soil use (monitoring increases in irrigation, reclassification of protected areas, urban development on wetlands, construction of infrastructure on fertile soil, etc - to draw up guidelines for preventing, monitoring and controlling soil pollution. Parliament proposed that European soils be zonified, taking account of geographic, climatic and typological heterogeneity, including uses and risks and its proposals for feasible monitoring at the appropriate levels; Finally, Parliament felt that soil protection should be better integrated into Community policies, in particular, in the context of the common agricultural policy (CAP), on (regional) infrastructure projects co-financed by the EU both in connection with the Trans-European Networks, and when granting support from the Structural and Cohesion Funds and pre-accession aid.