

Stimulating technologies for sustainable development: an environmental technologies action plan of the European Union

2004/2131(INI) - 20/04/2005

The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Riitta MYLLER(PES, FI) in response to the Commission communication on an Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP). MEPs welcomed the policy paper as "a useful basis for discussion", although they wanted to see more emphasis on boosting demand for environmental technologies.

They pointed to the employment and growth potential of the environmental technologies sector, where a multitude of new business opportunities and, consequently, new jobs can be created - notably within SMEs - which could make a crucial contribution to attaining the Lisbon objectives.

The report called on the Commission to identify the factors which impose the greatest burden on the environment today and subsequently consider what technological innovation is needed in each sector to address these problems.

The Commission was also asked to provide a first list of performance targets, based on the lifecycle approach, to be implemented through mandatory minimum requirements, or voluntary agreements when they achieve the policy objectives more quickly or at lesser expense.

MEPs urged the Commission to give the utmost priority to creating the right market conditions for environmental technologies, e.g. by implementing the 'polluter pays' principle and hence making sure that companies that offer clean technologies are rewarded.

The report stressed that the 7th Framework Programme for Research must provide funding for environmental technologies. It also regretted the Commission's failure to involve the European Patent Office in the ETAP initiative and called for mandatory disclosure of the results of publicly-funded research into environmental technology.

Lastly, the committee noted that ETAP must be coordinated with existing initiatives and stressed that the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund must be used "in a manner that is consistent with the aim of sustainable development and in particular encourages investments in environmental technologies".