# Sustainable development: environmental aspects

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Anne FERREIRA (PES, FR) in response to the Commission's 2005 paper presenting an initial stocktaking of the EU's sustainable development strategy and laying down future orientations.

The report said that it was regrettable that most of the orientations contained in the communication failed to respond to the magnitude of the challenges. It underlined the worsening of unsustainable trends in a number of fields: pollution-generating misuse of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, aggravation of climate change, the inequalities of poverty and the accumulation of public debt both in the EU and in third countries. It noted that there was a risk that the Union would not attain the Kyoto Protocol objectives for 2012, due to the lack of suitable measures to curb the rise in road transport. The committee was also concerned at the large and rapid increase in air transport and polluting emissions in that sector unless swift action was taken, and called on the Commission to create a pilot trading scheme for aviation emissions for the period 2008-2012, covering all flights to and from any EU airport.

MEPs singled out a number of areas in which they believed the Commission should step up its action, including:

- the transfer of a large proportion of road transport to more environmentally friendly modes of transport;

- promotion of the use of biofuels;

- reversal by 2010 of the current loss of biodiversity;

- reduction at source of the production of waste;

- promotion of sustainable town planning;

- multiplying resource and energy efficiency in production and consumption;

- reinforcing the environmental and social aspects of impact assessments for all its legislative proposals;

- new proposals for a first European ecotax by 2009;

- the adoption, by the summer of 2006 at the latest, of all the thematic strategies announced.

The committee concluded that sustainable development "must be a guiding principle for EU policies in all areas" and pointed out that inaction would come at an increasingly high price, have ever more considerable direct consequences and generate an intolerable burden for future generations.