Basic information

1994/2187(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Economic growth and environment **Subject** 3.70 Environmental policy 5.05 Economic growth	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	BLOKLAND Johannes (EDN)	20/12/1994
	Committee for opinion	**Rapporteur for opinion**	**Appointed**
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	RANDZIO-PLATH Christa (PSE)	20/12/1994
	ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	FERBER Markus (PPE)	02/02/1995
Council of the European Union			

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
03/11/1994	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1994)0465	Summary
30/11/1994	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
26/07/1995	Vote in committee		Summary
26/07/1995	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0206/1995	
10/10/1995	Debate in Parliament		Summary
11/10/1995	End of procedure in Parliament		
30/10/1995	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1994/2187(COS)

Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/06171

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0206/1995 OJ C 287 30.10.1995, p. 0004	26/07/1995	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0455/1995 OJ C 287 30.10.1995, p. 0077-0118	11/10/1995	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1994)0465	03/11/1994	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0405/1995 OJ C 155 21.06.1995, p. 0001	27/04/1995	Summary

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1994/2187(COS) - 11/10/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Johannes BLOKLAND (EDN, NL), Parliament considered that the Commission was still underestimating the urgency of the environmental situation, whereas the principle of sustainability called precisely for measures to be taken in the short term. It felt that the statement that "economic growth and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive but should go hand in hand" was put in terms which were too absolute. The report called on the Commission to draw up a European plan designed to allow a sustainable economic structure to be implemented in the year 2020 and drew attention to the fact that the measures which were essential for the creation of a sustainable economy would only account for a small proportion of GNP (2 to 3%) if they were taken at the right moment. In the same spirit, the report called for the development of a range of instruments (with a timetable for implementation) which were capable of creating a sustainable economy and supported the Commission's actions in respect of "green accounting". Parliament regretted that the Council had not been in a position to take practical steps in the area of environmental taxation (a CO2 tax). As a result, the report called on the Commission to develop, as soon as possible, practical models for the introduction of an energy tax which would have a positive impact, both in terms of growth and employment and as far as reducing the burden of pollution was concerned (for example, by offsetting the energy tax by a reduction in wage costs and by using the revenue from this tax to implement energy-saving measures). The Commission was also called on to develop an energy-taxation model which would provide for the taxation of primary energy at the beginning of the energy consumption process. The report also stated that as well as taxation, the Commission should consider a system of emission subsidies, fines and permits which would serve to reduce pollution levels. Urging the Commission to seek international cooperation on the application of minimum standards for environmental protection, the report also encouraged the transfer of ecotechnology to the developing countries. Finally, the Commission was called on to include environmental issues more emphatically in its employment policy and to introduce policies promoting reutilization, recycling and environmental protection in business and industry.

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1994/2187(COS) - 27/04/1995 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The ESC welcomed the Commission Communication, which was intended to prompt a wide-ranging debate on the implications for European economic policy of the inclusion of the principle of sustainable growth respecting the environment, as enshrined in Article 2 of the Maastricht Treaty, and the principle that all Community policies should take account of environmental protection requirements. The ESC felt that environmental taxes and charges and, more generally, an ecologically-oriented taxation system, would prove to be effective, in a large number of cases, in achieving significant pollution abatement levels and reduced consumption of resources. However, there was also good reason to believe that other market-based instruments (deposit-refund systems, tradable permit systems, tax and financial incentives, voluntary agreements, civil liability for environmental damage) would be particularly effective in attaining certain specific objectives of environmental policy. As regards the impact of environmental taxes on growth and employment, the ESC believed that, given the fiscal neutrality of environmental taxes, their introduction would lead to a reform of existing tax systems in Member States. In fact, the introduction of new environmental taxes should be accompanied by a thorough analysis of existing tax systems and the environmental distortions they created. It should also provide the opportunity to review tax policy in general, making it more ecologically-oriented, whilst paying due attention to the need to safeguard international competitiveness. The ESC believed there was a need for close ties between environmental policy and employment policy. This could be brought about by encouraging ecological redeployment in manufacturing and services, and funding actions and programmes for cleaning up the environment. The ESC was aware that the transition towards sustainable development would not be automatic and, in conclusion, emphasised the need for a coherent, long-term policy strategy. This should be phased in gradually and predictably so as to limit adjustment costs and give economic agents time to adjust (cf. point 4, page 15 of the Communication). This, moreover, was the stance adopted by the ESC in its Opinion on CO_2 emissions and energy, particularly in point 1.2.3. Despite the need to simplify regulations, the Committee reiterated its reluctance to interpret the use of economic instruments in the environmental field as being part of the deregulation process, since the implementation of market-based instruments demanded a framework of regulatory and monitoring provisions.

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1994/2187(COS) - 03/11/1994 - Non-legislative basic document

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.