Basic information

1996/2229(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Environment and development: common platform for EU preparation for UN session, June 1997 **Subject** 3.70 Environmental policy 5.05 Economic growth	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	DYBKJÆR Lone (ELDR)	17/12/1996

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development and Cooperation		

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Environment	1978	1996-12-09
Environment	2017	1997-06-19

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
12/11/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0569	Summary
09/12/1996	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
13/12/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
10/03/1997	Vote in committee		
10/03/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0083/1997	
13/03/1997	Debate in Parliament		
14/03/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
14/04/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		
19/06/1997	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1996/2229(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/4/08398

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0083/1997 OJ C 115 14.04.1997, p. 0014	10/03/1997	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0133/1997 OJ C 115 14.04.1997, p. 0223-0228	14/03/1997	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1996)0569	12/11/1996	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(1996)2069	19/11/1996	

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

1996/2229(COS) - 12/11/1996 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: the communication seeks to set out the guidelines for European Union preparation for the UN General Assembly Special Session to be held in June 1997 on the review of Agenda 21 and related outcomes of the Rio Conference (June 1992). SUBSTANCE: The document seeks to establish a common platform for the discussions by the Member States before the June 1997 meeting in New York and gives a list of objectives for the European Union for the special session in New York. Three types of recommendations are proposed: -a) Recommendations concerning the EU aims on the nature of UNGASS: . the Union should support the guidelines of the special session at Head of State level, . the Rio conclusions should be reviewed in five years time, . the priority for UNGASS should be the implementation of Agenda 21 and making it more operational, . UNGASS should set the Work Programme for the next cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), . EU negotiators preparing UNGASS will need to coordinate with those dealing with UN reform, to ensure a consistent approach (in particular in the financial field), .UNGASS will need to consider the future role of UNEP and the institutional aspects of environment policy, . civil society must be able to contribute to UNGASS. -b) Recommendations for EU aims for the Political Declaration: . harmonious and sustainable development can be guaranteed only through the integration of economic, social and environmental aspects in a democratic framework, . operational coordination of actions must be based on respect for subsidiarity (in particular at regional level), . the level of aid should not fall (rather, the least developed countries should benefit from additional aid), . development aid has become more environmental since Rio and encouragement should therefore be given to generalizing best practice in this field, . UNGASS should urge governments to strengthen the environmental dimension of their policies, . greater coherence is needed in the implementation of projects which have emerged from UN conferences, . the progress made since Rio with the launch of the World Bank/IMF Debt Initiatives must be continued, . trade and environment must play a mutually supportive role in favour of sustainable development, . the private sector must play a key role in relation to sustainable development (national and foreign investment is needed in this field). With regard to environmental priorities the Community wishes to

draw UNGASS' attention in particular to: . the need to give greater attention to renewable energy conservation and self-sustaining energy conservation, . forests (which is one of the main topics of UNGASS), . desertification and freshwater scarcity and the consequences on an international scale, . waste (in particular radioactive waste). -c) Recommendations on the role of the Commission for Sustainable Development and its work programme: the Community recommends reducing the number of decisions and making the texts adopted clearer. It must be ensured that decisions are implemented and regional activity is encouraged. The CSD should play a part in promoting regional projects and should see its role strengthened as a forum for exchanging ideas. The UN General Secretariat should produce a report to promote sustainable development. Clear objectives should be defined before the next series of special sessions, which should include discussions on oceans, forests and freshwater with a focus on urban and agricultural problems and the links to soil erosion and food security.

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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).

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1996/2229(COS) - 09/12/1996

The Council welcomed the communication from the Commission and considered it to be a good overall basis for defining the EU’s position on issues raised at the special session. It supported the Commission’s idea of involving the Heads of State in the meeting in order to enhance the public and political image of the session as well as to demonstrate that policy makers were committed to sustainable development. - As far as the objectives of the special session were concerned the Council was of the opinion that this meeting should not seek to re-negotiate Agenda 21 but rather should focus on analysing the successes and failures associated with its implementation. It was won over by the idea of revising the conclusions of the Rio Conference in five years time and stressed that the meeting should essentially highlight the responsibility of all concerned for the well-being of present and future generations. Discussions on safety issues associated with the environment, natural resources and food security should also be placed high on the agenda. The special session should draw up a programme of work for the next cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development, focussing on the need to change long-term trends in consumption and production and to incorporate the environmental dimension at every level. - As regards the political declaration the Council was of the opinion that this should be short and to the point, focussing on urgent priorities while drawing special attention to the following points: .natural resources and sustainable use: forests should be one of the main items on the agenda at the session, along with the growing shortage of fresh water and the implications of this on food production, soil management, the problem of the oceans, renewable energies, road traffic management and the associated environmental impact, sound management of chemical substances, waste reduction and the management of radioactive waste, etc. It also called for commitment from all donors to increase the level of financial aid to sustainable development (especially with regard to the poorest nations). In this context the EU had committed itself to achieving the targets set by the UN, namely that public aid to development should amount to 0.7% of GDP; .trade and environment: these two policies should be mutually supportive in order to strengthen sustainable development, whether this be under the WTO or within the context of regional and inter-regional free trade agreements. The work of the WTO and other international bodies should be based on a set of clear and predictable rules that would allow recourse to rational trade measures; . international and environmental law: it recalled that Agenda 21 gave the UNEP responsibility for coordinating international and environmental law. The special session should also take account of recommendations made by the UNEP and subscribe to them; - Finally, as regards the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development and its programme of work: the Council took the view that the session should adopt a work programme for the next Commission cycle, one that should more closely reflect the responsibility given to the said Commission in monitoring the progress of

sustainable development and its role as a forum for the exchange of ideas and experience. The Commission should restrict itself to dealing with three questions of global interest each year and apply itself to making its decisions more workable.