Basic information

1997/2107(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Combating acidification and air pollutants: Community strategy **Subject** 3.70.02 Atmospheric pollution, motor vehicle pollution	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	HULTHÉN Anneli (PSE)	22/07/1997

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	08/07/1997
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	VON WOGAU Karl (PPE)	20/05/1997
ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	MATIKAINEN-KALLSTRÖM Marjo (PPE)	04/11/1997
TRAN Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Environment	2033	1997-10-16
Environment	2017	1997-06-19
Environment	2062	1997-12-16

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
12/03/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)0088	Summary
19/06/1997	Debate in Council		

15/09/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/10/1997	Debate in Council		
16/12/1997	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
23/04/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
23/04/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0162/1998	
12/05/1998	Debate in Parliament		
13/05/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
01/06/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2107(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/4/08955

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0162/1998 OJ C 167 01.06.1998, p. 0004	23/04/1998	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0275/1998 OJ C 167 01.06.1998, p. 0080-0133	13/05/1998	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1997)0088	12/03/1997	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0274/1997 OJ C 064 27.02.1998, p. 0036	19/11/1997	

Combating acidification and air pollutants: Community strategy

1997/2107(COS) - 13/05/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Anneli HULTHÉN (PSE, S) on a strategy to combat acidification Parliament supported the Commission proposal to reduce by a half by 2010 the critical loads of acidification on the Union's ecosystems but wished to go further by proposing the setting of a new ambitious objective for 2015 whereby the critical loads should not be reached in any part of the area. Considering that the national emission ceilings method gave the Member States more flexibility to take the appropriate measures, it encouraged the Commission to support the Member States in making greater use of economic management measures geared towards the reduction of sulphur and nitrogen emissions. It considered that the EU's acidification strategy should be compatible with the work of the UN Economic Commission for Europe which dealt simultaneously with acidification, formation of ozone and eutrophication. The effectiveness of the strategy would also be improved if consideration were extended to the other European countries. It also called on the Commission to support Parliament's position on the Auto-Oil proposal for lower sulphur content for motor vehicle fuels from 2005. It also advocated full application of the polluter pays principle in particular in the transport sector. In this sector in particular Parliament called on the Commission to propose specific measures to reduce emissions of acidifying air pollutants from shipping by: - the introduction of differentiated port and fairway charges based on environmental considerations, - the laying down of rules on emissions from shipping linking EU ports, - voluntary emission-reduction agreements for ferries, - designation under the Marpol Convention of the North Sea, the Irish Sea and the English Channel as sensitive areas, - use of low-sulphur bunker oil. Measures should also be taken to reduce these emissions in the applicant countries. It also called on the Commission to propose a ceiling on the sulphur content of aviation fuel. It called for a strengthening of current legislation on emissions from large combustion plants (coal-fired power stations, cement plants and large waste incinerators) which were responsible for over 60% of SO2 emissions. However the plenary rejected the request put forward in the report for abolition of the coal subsidy. Aid to applicant countries should be subject to strict requirements concerning the steps taken to reduce emissions of acidifying substances. Parliament also called on the Commission to put forward a strategy for reducing the adverse effects of farming on the environment, in particular with regard to emissions of ammonia, methane and nitrates into the air, soil and water. The granting of agricultural subsidies should be linked to more stringent measures to combat ammonia emissions from farming.

Combating acidification and air pollutants: Community strategy

1997/2107(COS) - 12/03/1997 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: this communication responds to the request of the 1995 "Environment" Council for a coherent and integrated strategy to combat acidification. It sets out a series of specific actions based on national emission ceilings for the main atmospheric pollutants in question. CONTENT: the strategy proposed by the Commission follows from an in-depth analysis on the effects of acidification on the environment. Acidification is caused by emissions of atmospheric pollutants: sulphur dioxide (SO2), nitrous oxides (NOx) and ammonia (NH3). Given the significant increase in the devastating effect on ecosystems of acidification (degeneration of the soil, pollution of surface and ground water, deterioration of buildings, increase in human morbidity and mortality rates as the result of respiratory illnesses), pollution which gives rise to acidification needs to be reduced to acceptable levels. The analysis carried out by the Commission shows that a 50% reduction in the gap between the level of protection of sensitive ecosystems and the critical loads on the environment was exceeded in 1990 and that the final objective of 100% protection was a realistic objective to which the Community could aspire by the year 2010. The Commission intends to achieve this interim target through a 12-point strategy under which: 1) national emission ceilings would be set for the main pollutants in a European directive: setting ceilings would comply with the UN Economic Commission for Europe Convention on long- distance cross-border atmospheric pollution, while giving Member States the flexibility to decide how this could be achieved at minimum cost. A European directive would set ceilings for SO2, NOx, NH3 and VOCs ; 2) all the Member States would ratify the 1994 protocol on sulphur, which forms the basis for any action against acidification: a proposal for a decision on the conclusion of this protocol by the Community is attached to the communication (cf. CNS97107); 3) Directive 93/12/EEC relating to the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels would be revised: the combustion of heavy fuels is the main source of SO2 emissions from the use of liquid fuels, which is why the Commission proposes to reduce these emissions by setting stricter limits. A proposal for revising these limits is attached to the communication (cf. SYN97105); 4) emissions from fixed sources would be combatted: the Commission proposes revising Directive 88/609/EEC on the limitation of emissions from large combustion plants by setting new limit values (or even emission ceilings) for SO2 and NOx emissions from both old and new plants. These values would take account of local geographical and environmental conditions; 5) emissions from maritime transport would be reduced: the countries bordering the Baltic (which are particularly exposed to this type de pollution) would be classified as sensitive zones for SO2 emissions, i.e. zones in which ships would no longer be allowed to burn fuels containing more than 1.5% sulphur; 6) action to combat acidification in the CEECs would be supported (especially in future candidate countries bordering the Community); 7) a new multi-pollutant protocol would be ratified within the framework of the UN Economic Commission for Europe Convention on atmospheric pollution and the 1994 protocol on sulphur would be revised as a matter of urgency; 8) emissions of ammonia (NH3) would be reduced: this pollutant results mainly from agricultural activities. Initiatives have therefore been planned with a view to limiting emissions, especially from manure from cows and other bovines, emissions from poultry and strictly industrial emissions; 9) recourse would be taken to national and Community economic instruments: the Commission suggests combining national emission ceilings with economic instruments such as taxes, subsidies, incentives, emission permits and environmental agreements. Actions are also planned at Community level, such as an energy tax, navigation dues and measures under the CAP; 10) new emission values would be set for transport: the Commission has already tabled proposals on emissions and fuels ("auto-oil" directives, cf. COD96163 and COD96164). Other proposals could be made during 1998; 11) renewable energy: particular efforts would need to be made under the fifth framework programme for research in the area of alternative and renewable sources of energy and energy conservation; 12) a monitoring and revision process would be introduced: the Commission needs to evaluate the results of this strategy on an on-going basis, which is why it plans to draft a report by the end of 2004 on the effects of its strategy and foreseeable prospects between now and 2010.