Basic information

1997/2287(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Environment and employment: building a sustainable Europe **Subject** 3.70 Environmental policy 4.15 Employment policy, action to combat unemployment 5.05 Economic growth	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	HULTHÉN Anneli (PSE)	19/03/1997

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
REGI Regional Policy	LINDHOLM MaLou (V)	05/02/1998

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Environment	2062	1997-12-16

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
18/11/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)0592	Summary
15/12/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/12/1997	Debate in Council		
04/06/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
04/06/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0233/1998	
15/07/1998	Debate in Parliament		
16/07/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
21/09/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2287(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148 Rules of Procedure EP 050
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/09546

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0233/1998 OJ C 210 06.07.1998, p. 0008	04/06/1998	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0439/1998 OJ C 292 21.09.1998, p. 0106-0149	16/07/1998	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1997)0592	18/11/1997	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0787/1998 OJ C 235 27.07.1998, p. 0001	28/05/1998	
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0075/1998 OJ C 051 22.02.1999, p. 0041	18/11/1998	

Environment and employment: building a sustainable Europe

1997/2287(COS) - 18/11/1997 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: to define a strategy through which environment and employment policies can be made mutually beneficial. SUBSTANCE: the communication is based on three key observations: 1) that the Union is characterised by 'underuse' of its labour resources (with an average unemployment rate of over 10%) and an 'overuse' of natural resources; 2) that the industrialised world is responsible for a significant part of global environmental problems: the main problems arise in a number of specific sectors of the economy (industry, transport, energy, agriculture) and in the pattern of consumption; 3) the way we presently produce goods and services is still based on investment and price relations of the past when environmental concerns were much less important. The Commission therefore considers that the Member States must speed up the transition to new and clean technologies seeking to replace polluting technologies. They must also reconsider ways for financing the provision of public goods. The most favourable time for making this shift is when old capital is to be replaced with new investment integrating high environment standards. The benefits would be twofold: - investment would create jobs and business opportunities; - new technologies would lead to a better environment. If well designed this new environmental policy could become a strong driving force for investment and employment. The Commission therefore proposes a series of initiatives which could help the Member States to link their employment and environment policies. The actions proposed concentrate on the following five areas: - benchmarking of employment and environmental achievements of economic sectors so as to encourage public authorities in their reorientation towards cleaner methods of production and consumption; - assessing and promoting the development of clean technologies and

identifying their effects in employment terms; - stepping up, in the context of enlargement, efforts to link employment and sustainable development through Community initiatives and funding (through urban renovation and rural development); - continuing the gradual restructuring of tax systems by reducing non-wage labour costs and by incorporating environmental and resource costs (in particular energy) in the price of goods and services; - promoting environmental education and training so as to support the implementation of new environmentally friendly technologies and working practices.

Environment and employment: building a sustainable Europe

1997/2287(COS) - 16/07/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs HULTHEN (PSE, S) on the Commission communication on the environment and employment strategy, Parliament approved the broad outlines of the strategy proposed. It considered however that it should be more specific and called on the Commission to draw up a more detailed definition of environmentally-driven growth and environment-related employment. It called on the Commission to review the scope for generating environmentally-driven growth in the various regions of the Union. It also called for a qualitative assessment comparing the quality and stability of jobs in this sector. A reliable mechanism should also be created to assess the number and stability of the jobs created in this sector under the Structural Funds. Parliament also proposed the setting up of a European forum for environmental technology and the establishment of a 'Partnership for sustainable growth' to draw up a coherent programme of action in this context. The Commission should consider the possibility of submitting an action plan for setting up regional and interregional partnerships involving industry and local authorities. The same principle should be applied to the applicant countries. Noting that structural policies were able to stimulate environmental policy, it stressed that the fundamental priorities of the funds should be geared towards coordinated action in favour of the environment, including 'green jobs'. It also called on the Commission to: - take greater account of the impact of investment on the environment in the allocation of Community budget funds, in particular by further greening of the budget, - work out a common system for measuring and assessing environmental investment and its impact on employment, - develop training and research in this field, together with the Member States, - submit a proposal seeking to increase the scope for taking account of environmental criteria in public procurement, - introduce user-friendly environmental information about technology, energy and transport, - promote, with the Member States, the use of renewable energy sources, - shift the emphasis in EU waste policy from incineration towards recycling, - shift, in its transport policy, towards water and rail transport modes, - support organic farming, - set up a European environmental technology forum. At the same time it called for changes in taxation penalising activities which used up natural resources or damaged the environment and giving tax advantages to those promoting sustainable development and the creation of 'green' jobs. Parliament also considered that revenue from taxation of environmentally harmful activities could be invested in environmental protection and employment stimulation. It also called on the Council to stop blocking the Commission proposal for a directive on the introduction of a tax on carbon dioxide emissions and energy. Lastly Parliament stressed the need for aid to innovative SMUs in the environmental sector and the need to establish common environmental standards for building materials.