Basic information

1998/2033(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Environment, biodiversity : community strategy **Subject** 3.70 Environmental policy	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	SJÖSTEDT Jonas (GUE/NGL)	25/02/1998

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	GRAEFE ZU BARINGDORF Friedrich-Wilhelm (V)	16/04/1998
ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	TRAKATELLIS Antonios (PPE)	17/03/1998
TRAN Transport and Tourism	TAMINO Gianni (V)	21/04/1998
PECH Fisheries	LANGENHAGEN Brigitte (PPE)	19/03/1998

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Environment	2062	1997-12-16
Environment	2106	1998-06-16

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
16/12/1997	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
04/02/1998	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1998)0042	Summary
13/03/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		

16/06/1998	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
23/09/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
23/09/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0347/1998	
19/10/1998	Debate in Parliament		
20/10/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
09/11/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1998/2033(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/4/09758

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0347/1998 OJ C 328 26.10.1998, p. 0005	23/09/1998	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0609/1998 OJ C 341 09.11.1998, p. 0012-0041	20/10/1998	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1998)0042	04/02/1998	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	SEC(1998)0348	20/02/1998	Summary

Environment, biodiversity : community strategy

1998/2033(COS) - 20/10/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mr Jonas Sjöstedt (GUE/NGL, S) on biodiversity, Parliament denounces the negative impact of agricultural and fisheries policies on biodiversity. It stresses the particular need for initiatives, measures and programmes on this subject at national, international and Community level. Welcoming the Commission communication as a first step towards raising awareness of loss of biodiversity, Parliament considers that there is a need for an inventory of species, ecosystems and natural gene banks to enable the situation of those that are threatened to be assessed. Parliament also urges the Commission to present an overview of the measures which the Community has initiated and to encourage incorporation of the biodiversity element in the various policies which are implemented and to include in its strategy the development of basic knowledge of biodiversity. Overall,

Parliament inveighs against EU projects with a negative direct impact on biodiversity and urges the Union no longer to support this type of project. It calls on the Commission to ensure that the habitats and birds directives are implemented fully, to adopt appropriate measures to require Member States fully to comply with Community law on the environment and nature conservancy and to intensify monitoring in sensitive area. It calls on the Commission to stipulate that the action plans on biodiversity be ready within two years and to specify timetables for the individual measures proposed. It calls for action also in the areas of transport and energy. Parliament firmly denounces the damage to biodiversity caused by the common agricultural policy and calls on the EU to cease financing projects which directly harm biodiversity through the CAP, trans-European networks or the Structural Funds. In the context of the current CAP reform, Parliament calls for a switch to sustainable agriculture (e.g. low- density grazing) and financial support for environmental measures and organic farming. In relation to negotiations for enlarging the EU, priority should be given to this aspect so as not to impoverish these countries' biological heritage. Parliament is also concerned at the proliferation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) which could have a considerable impact on indigenous organisms. In this regard, Parliament calls for an investigation into the impact of the CAP on the use and preservation of genetic resources in agriculture and forestry. Parliament also points out that caution is needed with regard to introducing foreign species and GMOs. With regard to GMOs, measures at international level are also needed. Parliament calls in particular for some simple rules: for the export of GMOs or products containing GMOs to non-member states, exporters or importers should obtain approval of the import from the country of destination and from the authority in the competent Member State. Approval should also be obtained for the export from the country of destination. Parliament also calls for a clear and all-inclusive system for labelling products derived from or containing GMOs. Parliament also notes the disastrous impact of the European fisheries policy on certain fish stocks, marine mammals and turtles; fishing methods and fishing gear should be adapted to reduce habitat degradation. The FAO code of conduct for responsible fishing should be fully applied and a plan should be implemented for research into the interaction between fisheries and marine ecosystems. Pointing out once more the importance of managing fish stocks, Parliament calls on the Commission to draw up an action plan to achieve sustainable management of fish stocks and support traditional fishing methods. Where necessary, activities of distant water fishing fleets operating in international waters should be reduced. Underlining the importance of raising public awareness of environmental damage, Parliament calls for appropriate financial resources to be provided for public information. Parliament considers indispensable the establishment of an institutional framework to legally safeguard the use and balanced sharing-out of the benefits of biodiversity. It calls on the Commission to commit itself to a binding Biosafety Protocol, linked to the Convention on Biodiversity, which safeguards human and animal health, the environment and biological diversity and which protects the socio-economic welfare of societies. Economic incentives should also be provided to safeguard biodiversity and legislative measures (fines or taxes) to discourage practices which harm biodiversity. Parliament calls for aid to the regions to be withdrawn if the projects implemented do not meet the required environmental criteria or have a directly harmful impact on biological diversity, and urges the Commission to take account of the strategy for biological diversity in the forthcoming regulation concerning the EU Structural Funds for the period 2000-2006. It calls on the EIB to improve its environment work. Improvements are also called for with regard to transport, particularly with regard to implementing networks. The construction of new infrastructure in protected areas should not lead to a reduction of biodiversity, or projects not respecting this rule should not receive Community financial support. Parliament calls for revision of the TEN guidelines in the light of their impact on biodiversity, by July 1999. It also calls for more awareness in private and public tourism installations in order to promote sustainable tourism. In particular it suggests international guidelines for sustainable tourism and the concept of an ecolabel for sustainable tourism. Parliament criticises the fact that the Commission has not considered the effect of chemical products and industrial processes on biodiversity.

Environment, biodiversity : community strategy

1998/2033(COS) - 20/02/1998 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

In a working document on the European biodiversity strategy, the Commission submits the first report on the implementation in the Union of the objectives of the International Convention on Biodiversity. In particular, in accordance with the Community's commitments in this field, the Commission seeks to monitor the development of biodiversity in the Member States at regular intervals (Decision II/17 of the Second Conference of the Parties to the Biodiversity Convention). The report is also a useful means of verifying compliance with the Union's obligations and commitments under the Convention. It contains an in-depth assessment of the biological situation in the Union and its importance, looking particularly at ecosystems, habitats and species. It gives an overview of the measures in progress or planned and of Community instruments which could help to pursue the objectives of the Convention. These objectives are being pursued in 8 priority sectors: -conservation of natural resources, -agriculture, -forestry, -fisheries, -regional policy and land-use planning, -transport and energy, -tourism, -development and economic cooperation. For each of these sectors, the Commission gives details of the measures taken.

Environment, biodiversity : community strategy

1998/2033(COS) - 04/02/1998 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: to define a Community strategy for biological diversity in the EU. SUBSTANCE: the communication from the Commission indicates that in recent decades there has been a spectacular decline in global biodiversity. It may be recalled that biodiversity is defined as diversity of living organisms of whatever origin (sea, land, etc.) and comprises diversity both of species and of ecosystems. The objective of the proposed Community strategy is to help to reverse this phenomenon of erosion and to preserve species and ecosystems (including those which are agricultural) in a satisfactory state of conservation in the Union and elsewhere. The basic elements of this strategy are closely linked to the implementation of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, ratified by the Union on 21.12.1993. At present this is the only worldwide legally binding instrument in its field (Rio Conference, 1992). All Member States are contracting parties to the Convention and have adopted national implementation strategies. The Community strategy seeks mainly to consolidate and implement existing Community policies and instruments in application of the objectives of the Convention. Two stages are envisaged: a. the adoption of a strategy laying down the broad outlines of the policy to be pursued; b. the drawing up and implementation of action plans and other measures by the Commission to attain the objectives derived from the Convention. The main elements of the proposed Community strategy are as follows: 1) the main themes of the strategy: 4 horizontal themes are formulated, within which specific objectives must be attained by means of the action plans and other Community measures, both existing and future: -conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (in situ and ex situ): restoration of ecosystems and populations of species in their natural surroundings; -sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources: access to genetic resources and sharing of the benefits of biotechnology including research and commercial partnerships; technology transfer; scientific cooperation and improved knowledge of traditional life styles; -research, identification, monitoring and exchange of information:

intensification of efforts to identify and monitor the constituents of biodiversity and the threats to it; -education, training and awareness: implementing measures to improve public awareness of the causes and consequences of loss of biodiversity. 2) action plans and other measures to attain at Community level the objectives formulated for each theme and field of activity: a procedure is to be devised to ensure that biodiversity aspects are taken into account in the Union's sectoral policies: conservation of natural resources, agriculture, fisheries, regional policy and regional development, forests, energy and transport, tourism, development aid and economic cooperation. As regards conservation of natural resources, the following measures are proposed: -establishment of networks of designated areas, particularly the EU NATURA 2000 network, -financial and technical assistance with the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in these areas, -development in cooperation with Member States of instruments to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity across the territory outside protected areas. In the field of agriculture, the strategy stresses taking biodiversity into account in the reform of the CAP announced in Agenda 2000. There is also an emphasis on the ecological function of rural areas, promoting farming methods which promote biodiversity (particularly by making farm support conditional on respect for ecological criteria). With regard to regional policies and land use planning, the Community strategy devotes special attention to rural areas, where farming is often the only barrier to loss of biodiversity and deterioration of natural habitats.