

Basic information

2007/2204(INI)

INI - Own-initiative procedure

Mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme

Subject

3.70 Environmental policy

3.70.20 Sustainable development

Procedure completed

Key players

European
Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	MYLLER Riitta (PSE)	05/06/2007
Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
DEVE Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
INTA International Trade	KARIM Sajjad (ALDE)	17/07/2007
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
TRAN Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
REGI Regional Development	JELEVA Rumiana (PPE-DE)	03/10/2007
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	LAVARRA Vincenzo (PSE)	08/10/2007

European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	Environment	DIMAS Stavros

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
30/04/2007	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2007)0225 	
27/09/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
26/02/2008	Vote in committee		Summary
13/03/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0074/2008	
09/04/2008	Debate in Parliament		
10/04/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0122/2008	Summary
10/04/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
10/04/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2007/2204(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/6/50255

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE398.365	28/11/2007	
Committee opinion	INTA	PE394.036	19/12/2007	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE400.291	11/01/2008	
Committee opinion	AGRI	PE398.477	22/01/2008	
Committee opinion	REGI	PE398.438	23/01/2008	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0074/2008	13/03/2008	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0122/2008	10/04/2008	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2007)0225 	30/04/2007	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2007)0546 	30/04/2007	
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2007)0547 	30/04/2007	

Mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme

2007/2204(INI) - 10/04/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 599 votes to 19 with 19 abstentions, a resolution on the mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme. The own-initiative report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Riitta **MYLLER** (PSE, FI) on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

Parliament considers it regrettable that the mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme (Sixth EAP) has been delayed by almost a year. It deplores the fact that, on the whole, the EU is not on schedule with the implementation of the measures planned in the Action Programme, contrary to what the Commission claims in its own mid-term review. The EU must do everything in its power to attain the objectives agreed in the Sixth EAP, as failure to attain them would damage the EU's credibility. Parliament notes that, whilst the use of **thematic strategies** has created additional opportunities for stakeholder involvement, they have also lengthened the duration of the environmental policy-making process by delaying the formulation of concrete policy proposals.

Members believe that, within the EU, competences must be clearly allocated and defined. They point out that **the Commission's mid-term review** shows confusion and internal ambiguity with regard to the competences of the Commission and of the Member States. Both the limits of respective competences and specific responsibilities must be clearly established and set down in order to ensure that those responsibilities continue to be met. It is essential to strengthen the position of the Sixth Environment Action Programme as the environmental dimension of the EU's sustainable development strategy.

Parliament recalls that the **full and correct implementation of the existing legislation** is a priority and stresses that binding legislation remains central to meeting environmental challenges. MEPs call on the Commission to strengthen its activities as guardian of the Treaty, and call on the EU budgetary authority to provide the Commission with all the necessary financial and human resources to ensure that the most efficient monitoring of the implementation and enforcement of existing legislation is carried out in all Member States.

In addition, Parliament calls for EU environmental policies to be designed, and reviewed, so as to focus more on goal prescriptions rather than means descriptions, leaving Member States and farmers free to find the most effective and efficient means for reaching the desired goals. The Commission and the Member States are urged to promote stronger and more coherent environmental policy integration in all EU policy-making. Parliament calls for integration of environmental protection and health protection aspects into all policies, regretting both the lack of integration of these aspects in various environmental legal frameworks and the preparations for new legislation and the lack of their integration into legislation which has primary objectives other than environmental protection. Parliament highlights the following:

-the need to elaborate binding sectoral targets and timetables in order to achieve concrete results towards the integration of environmental considerations in other economic sectors;

-the responsibility of economic stakeholders of certain sectors of activity in order to obtain results in the long term, in the area of energy and climate;

-the need to take the Natura 2000 programme in regional development programmes into account, so as to reconcile the principle of protection of European biodiversity with the development and improved quality of life of the population.

Parliament is concerned by the findings of various independent studies that **the Commission guidelines on impact assessments** are not fully respected by Commission DGs, that the assessment and quantification of economic impacts has been emphasised at the expense of environmental, social and international impacts, that the costs of legislation are assessed far more than the benefits, and that short-term considerations overshadow the long-term. It calls on the Commission to take action to rectify these persistent deficiencies.

The Commission and Member States are called upon to:

-devote more effort to **ecological tax reform**, including a gradual shift of the tax burden from welfare-negative taxes (e.g. on labour) towards welfare-positive taxes, (e.g. on environmentally damaging activities, such as resource use or pollution);

-benefit from bilateral and regional **trade negotiations** to move towards trade commitments which have direct environmental benefits;

- assist developing countries in the deployment of sustainable and efficient technologies through all mechanisms available;
- adopt genuinely **green public procurement rules** to promote innovation and sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- intensify efforts to achieve the 20% target for renewables and the 10% target for biofuel consumption keeping in mind that **energy crops** must not jeopardise food supplies. The sustainability mechanism, which is at the development stage, should apply the most stringent sustainability criteria to biofuels.

MEPs call on the EU to promote climate diplomacy in its trade relations with countries which are not linked by multilateral agreements on environmental protection, like the USA, China and India, who for various reasons are not implementing the Kyoto Protocol.

Lastly, Parliament highlights the importance of raising consumer awareness and supports the development of a clear and comprehensive labelling system.

Mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme

2007/2204(INI) - 30/04/2007

PURPOSE: to present a communication on the Mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme.

CONTENT: for the past thirty years the EU's environmental programme has been guided by strategic Environmental Action Programmes. The Sixth Community Action Programme (6th EAP) establishes the Community framework for environment policy and covers the period July 2002 to 2012 (see [COD/2001/0029](#)). It represents the environmental dimension of the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy and sets out the EU's environmental priorities. It focuses on four issues: climate change, nature and biodiversity, health and the quality of life, and natural resources and waste. The purpose of this report is to offer a mid-term review of the 6th EAP.

It addresses three distinct questions. Firstly, the extent to which the Union is meeting commitments made; secondly, to consider the most recent scientific evidence as a means of assessing whether the original goals set out in the 6th EAP are capable of being met; and thirdly to consider whether the EU's approach to environmental policy needs to be reassessed in light of the changed political context – in other words taking account of the recently revised EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs and the Commission's Better Regulation agenda.

The Commission concludes the mid-term review of the 6th EAP by stating that the EU's environmental policy is one of its major achievements. Despite the progress that has been made the EU's level of ambition needs to be increased. The EU is not yet on the path of sustainable environmental development. There has only been limited progress with the fundamental issues of integrating environmental concerns into other policy areas and improving the enforcement of EU legislation. Many environmental pressures are actually increasing: global emissions of greenhouse gasses are rising, the loss of biodiversity is accelerating, pollution still has a major effect on public health, the amount of waste produced inside the EU continues to increase, and our ecological footprint is steadily growing.

Climate change, biodiversity, health and resource use remain the most pressing environmental challenges and the 6th EAP is still the correct framework for future action at Community level. The EU is generally on-track with adopting the measures outlined in the Action Programme. However, five years into a ten-year Programme it is too early to see the results of most of the measures proposed under the 6th EAP. Many have only recently been adopted and ensuring implementation will therefore be the immediate priority of the Commission.

A review of the most recent scientific situation does reveal several gaps between the objectives set in the 6th EAP and the measures set out for achieving these objectives. In these areas existing measures will have to be strengthened or new measures adopted.

The perspectives for better policy-making are the following:

Enhanced international co-operation: in the coming years the Commission will concentrate on: a) promoting sustainable development worldwide and further mainstreaming environmental considerations into all EU external policies; b) putting in place an effective "environmental diplomacy" will mean linking environmental objectives with other international negotiations. The EU will continue to promote sustainable development issues in the context of WTO negotiations; c) using the negotiations for Free Trade Agreements with partners in Asia and Latin America. These will be an opportunity to boost trade in sustainable goods and services; d) promoting our environmental policies and requirements; e) promoting the transfer of technology and/or resources with developing countries as an incentive for them to address global problems such as climate change; f) working with Member States in order to develop regional/country support strategies that adequately address environment and natural resource management issues; g) intensifying, together with Member States, the dialogue with key emerging economies such as China, India, Brazil, Ukraine and South Africa; h) improving international environmental governance; i) setting up an International Panel on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and supporting a global system to monitor the levels of biodiversity (in particular as regards forests); j) making sure that European environmental policy concerns are also taken forward in coordination with Member States in specialised organisations such as the International Maritime Organisation and the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

"Better Regulation" principles in environmental policy-making: in the coming years, the Commission will focus on strengthening the Better Regulation agenda in environment policy-making by using the market to deliver environmental results; simplifying the existing regulatory environment and reducing administrative costs; cooperating fully with civil society when developing environmental policies and developing a close working relationship with industry in order to promote sustainable development agenda; promoting the dissemination of good regulatory practices; and streamlining reporting requirements while improving the quality of environmental information.

Using the market to deliver environmental results: the Commission has recently adopted a Green Paper on market-based instruments for environment and related policy purposes. The 2007 revision of the IPPC Directive will also consider if market-based mechanisms can be used to strengthen

implementation and to promote innovation. An important instrument which can influence consumer behaviour is the optimal use of environment related taxation. However, these taxes need to be applied such a way as to avoid distorting the functioning of the internal market and to maximise the environmental benefit. The EU is also committed to removing environmentally damaging subsidies and by 2008 the Commission will put forward a roadmap for the reform, sector by sector, of these subsidies with a view to eliminating them.

The Commission will propose an extension of performance labelling schemes from electrical appliances and cars to other groups of products.

Simplification, codification and reduction of administrative burden: the Commission envisages revising a number of important legal instruments, with a view to further simplification, codification and reduction of administrative burden.

Working Closely with Stakeholders: the Commission will continue to work closely with civil society when formulating environmental policies. A better approach to regulation also requires a good working relationship with industry – who are ultimately responsible for implementing the majority of environmental laws. The Commission will also build on its dialogue with business, trade unions and NGOs in order to develop ambitious business responses - such as corporate reporting - which go beyond existing minimum legal requirements. The Commission and Member States will need to continue efforts to promote eco-innovations and environmental technologies as industry can make important contributions on environmental protection. There is also a need to improve the functioning of the voluntary instruments that have been designed for industry: EMAS and Eco-label.

Promoting good regulatory practices: the Commission will improve the monitoring of policy effectiveness and promote a more structured dissemination of good practices and turn best practices into standard practices.

Simplified and improved environmental information: ongoing efforts to modernise the way information is created and exchanged will be stepped up, in particular by the development of a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) to ensure wide availability of the information needed to develop and implement environment policy, while cutting unnecessary administrative burdens on Member State authorities.

Promotion of Policy Integration: in the agricultural sector there have been fundamental reforms over the last 15 years that have moved towards seeing farmers as stewards of nature. However, the integration of environmental concerns into other areas has been less successful. To improve the assessment of environmental impacts at national level the Commission will review the effectiveness of Directives on Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments. The Commission will seek to speed up these procedures while ensuring that the protection of the environment is not compromised. The Commission will produce a strategic framework in order to address the issue of policy integration. It will pay particular attention to the sectors where there is the greatest potential for policy synergies in order to improve the quality of the environment (agriculture, fisheries, transport, energy, regional and industrial policy and EU external relations). To improve the assessment of environmental impacts at national level the Commission will review the effectiveness of Directives on Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments. The Commission will seek to speed up these procedures while ensuring that the protection of the environment is not compromised.

Improved implementation and enforcement: if a common environment policy framework is now in place, the high number of complaints and infringement procedures are a sign that the implementation of environmental legislation remains far from satisfactory. In 2007, the Commission will draw up a revised strategy on implementation and enforcement of EC environment law. This strategy will focus particularly on the systematic implementation failures that have been identified and will encourage the use of a mix of legal and non-legal instruments.