

able as well as being inconsistent with the Council Resolution of 18 June 1992. The Committee therefore

calls on the Commission to immediately draw the necessary conclusions.

Done at Brussels, 28 January 1993.

The Chairman
of the Economic and Social Committee
Susanne TIEMANN

Opinion on the proposal for a Council Decision for a monitoring mechanism of Community CO₂ and other greenhouse-gas emissions

(93/C 73/13)

On 22 June 1992 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 130s of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, on the abovementioned proposal.

The Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its Opinion on 5 January 1993. The Rapporteur was Mr Silva.

At its 302nd Plenary Session (meeting of 28 January 1993), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following Opinion with no votes against and 4 abstentions.

1. Background to the proposal

1.1. In order to assess properly all the implications of the present proposal, it should be considered:

- in relation to previous EC activity in this area, and in particular the undertaking made by the Energy/Environment Council of 29 October 1990 to stabilize CO₂ emissions at their 1990 levels by the year 2000;
- in the light of present emissions and likely trends in the next few years;
- in close connection with (a) the on-going international debate on this subject, (b) the establishment and harmonization of monitoring and measuring methods at national, EC and international level, and (c) the willingness and commitment of the Member States and other interested parties, including the socio-economic groups who are directly involved;

— in relation—with due account for its more specific nature—to the Commission's proposed strategy for limiting emissions and improving energy efficiency comprising the SAVE and Altener programmes and the possible adoption of fiscal measures ⁽¹⁾.

1.2. The Committee has always welcomed the major work and research accomplished in this field, the positive experiences gleaned, the significant data and analyses that have been compiled, and the efforts to overcome difficulties and differences of opinion and to agree on common measures. The serious delays are due both to the complexity of the problem and to the continuing disagreements between Member States and different sectors on the measures to be taken jointly or individually, taking account of the differing development and

⁽¹⁾ Doc. SEC(91) 1744 final, doc. COM(92) 246 final, doc. COM(92) 180, 182 and 226 final.

pollution levels and the need to share the costs and benefits fairly. The Committee therefore welcomes the present proposal as a major contribution to overcome these problems by means of effective, coordinated and integrated measures.

2. Topicality and gist of the proposal

2.1. The gestation period of the proposal has coincided with:

- 1) the intensification of the debate on the greenhouse effect, but also an approximation of positions at EC and international level as regards the steps to be taken and the costs to be borne by different countries;
- 2) the formulation of a number of procedures, time-tables and deadlines in the proposal, which will make it easier for the Member States to accept and implement it;
- 3) the debates before, during and after the Rio Summit, which have helped to clarify international public perceptions of this problem.

2.2. The Community envisages a package of measures, including the monitoring mechanism, to stabilize EC emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases by the year 2000 at their 1990 levels. This is seen as a minimum, feasible target and is in line with the Convention on climate change signed at the Rio Summit and recently ratified by the United States.

2.3. The Commission is drawing partly on the findings of experiments done over a number of years (such as the Corine data monitoring programme), Eurostat statistics, and work done by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the harmonization of monitoring methods. The monitoring mechanism is to be based on five key elements:

- 1) national programmes, to be drawn up by the Member States;
- 2) evaluation of these programmes by the Commission in the light of the EC stabilization agreement;
- 3) follow-up to the national programmes by means of a data reporting system;
- 4) establishment of an inventory of greenhouse-gas emissions;
- 5) setting-up of a consultative committee of Member State representatives.

3. CO₂ and other greenhouse-gas emissions in Europe and the world: data and assessments

3.1. Greenhouse effect and effect on the climate

3.1.1. World carbon-dioxide levels have increased by 20% over the last ten years, and other greenhouse gases (methane, nitrogen dioxides, CFC) are also on the increase. This influences the earth's temperature. According to the IPCC, this temperature has risen over the last hundred years by between 0,3° and 0,6°. A doubling of carbon dioxide levels over the next few decades could trigger a further increase of 1,5° to 4,5°, and this would have very serious consequences.

3.2. CO₂ emissions by country and groups of countries

3.2.1. In 1989, CO₂ emissions accounted for 61% of greenhouse-gas emissions. The EC was responsible for 13%, the USA for 23%, Eastern Europe for 25%, and Japan for 5%⁽¹⁾. Recent forecasts suggest that if nothing is done, CO₂ emissions are likely to increase by 13,5% over the period 1990 to 2000⁽²⁾. Over the period 1986 to 1990 EC emissions rose by 4%, after having remained stable over the period 1970 to 1985⁽³⁾: these variations are largely a reflection of oil price trends.

3.3. Relation between population, resources and CO₂ emissions

3.3.1. 20% of the world's population consumes 80% of resources and produces 80% of pollution. The most highly industrialized countries are the main source of greenhouse-gas emissions: the United States, with 5% of the world population, uses 25% of all energy and releases 23% of all carbon dioxide emissions. India, with 16% of the world's population, owns only 1% of world resources, uses 3% of all energy and emits 3% of all carbon dioxide. However, one must bear in mind that the developing countries are going to increase their emissions rapidly as their energy consumption rises. Within 30 or 40 years, the use of carbon fuels as an energy source to support economic growth in China could on its own double man-made emissions of carbon dioxide, even though per capita gas emissions in China will remain significantly below those of such countries as Italy and France.

4. General comments

4.1. Subject to the comments which follow, the Committee endorses both the proposal itself and the considerations on which it is based.

⁽¹⁾ Source: doc. SEC(91) 1744 final.

⁽²⁾ Energy in Europe: A view to the future (September 1992, EC Commission DG XVII).

⁽³⁾ Eurostat Environment Statistics 1989.

4.2. Community action

4.2.1. The Commission Communication states that the decision to limit emissions is prompted by the fact that the 'removal of CO₂ from emissions at present is not only uneconomic but at the technical level such methods are far from being sufficiently developed.'⁽¹⁾ Hence the only practical solution in the short and medium term is to limit the growing use of fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency, and promote renewable energy sources.

4.2.2. Nevertheless, the Committee suggests that the Community give firmer support to EC research and development and to non-polluting technologies and processes for the use of fossil fuel energy, insofar as this will continue to play a role in the future.

4.2.3. While the Committee can support this pragmatic and realistic approach, it should be backed by a commitment to make up for lost time by adopting and implementing the proposed monitoring mechanism very soon. Appropriate financial instruments will also be needed to help those Member States which will find it difficult to act in the short time allowed them.

4.2.4. The Committee's November 1989 Opinion on the European Environment Agency⁽²⁾ expressed serious concern at the delays and opposition to the establishment of the Agency and the failure to agree on where it should be based. This concern has been reiterated in subsequent Opinions. It is clear that the Environment Agency would provide the best framework for the proposed monitoring mechanism. The present Commission proposal is important partly because it seeks to reduce these delays and difficulties by bringing in a Community mechanism to monitor and act on CO₂ and other greenhouse-gas emissions at both EC and national level.

4.2.5. The Committee considers that the proposed Decision should be based on Articles 130r and 130s of the EEC Treaty. Under these Articles, the Community must take account of the potential benefits and costs of action or of lack of action, and apply the 'polluter pays' principle. This means internalizing the external costs of environmental damage⁽³⁾.

4.2.6. The principle is particularly important with reference to damage caused by energy use; this justifies the promotion of preventive measures such as improvements in energy efficiency.

4.2.7. In supporting the mechanism and the Community strategy, the Committee also endorses the common objective of stabilizing emissions. Three types of action are envisaged, based on the principle that burdens should be shared fairly:

- 1) stepping-up of non-fiscal measures (SAVE and Altener programmes);
- 2) economic and fiscal instruments, with a possible tax to encourage energy saving and a reduction in emissions, but without causing an increase in the overall tax burden;
- 3) national implementing and additional measures.

4.3. Community action and international cooperation

4.3.1. The Committee stresses the need for a global solution. CO₂ emissions affect the whole planet and therefore call for a global solution which should involve all developed and developing countries. Although the developed world has hitherto been the main CO₂ producer and polluter, all the signs are that the developing nations' CO₂ emissions are set to increase rapidly in the next few years. To take account of the various measures adopted and the difficulties encountered in different areas, EC strategy should therefore encourage all countries (from the most industrialized to those of Eastern Europe and the developing world) to speed up the definition and implementation of measures sharing the same aims.

4.4. Cooperation with developing countries and Eastern Europe

4.4.1. The Committee considers that a special effort should be made to involve the developing countries in such action, by framing appropriate agreements and measures as soon as possible, including the transfer of technology and financial resources.

4.4.2. East European countries produce a significant proportion of greenhouse-gas emissions. The Committee considers that experience-swapping and cooperation⁽⁴⁾ should be undertaken with these countries as a matter of urgency, so as to avoid the problems that have beset other countries with heavy concentrations

⁽¹⁾ Doc. SEC(91) 1744 final, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ No C 56, 7. 3. 1990.

⁽³⁾ OJ No C 332, 31. 12. 1990.

⁽⁴⁾ Under the Phare programme and European energy charter.

of industry and energy. The main aim should be to encourage moves towards energy efficiency and environmental and technological rehabilitation, taking account of the complicated and difficult economic restructuring facing these countries.

5. Specific comments and recommendations

5.1. The Committee would make the following points on the structure of the new mechanism and the proposed procedures.

5.2. *Article 1—Monitoring mechanism*

5.2.1. The Committee endorses the proposal and the highly realistic objective, but feels that concern to take account of differing interests and situations may have led to the establishment of an excessively distant deadline. The main work on achieving stabilization at 1990 levels by the year 2000, will only begin in 1994 (the date laid down for the drawing-up of national programmes and the setting of national targets for 1996, 1998 and 2000). If there are further delays, disagreements or failures to comply, the operation could fail to achieve the desired results. To avoid such difficulties and fragmentation of efforts, it might be necessary to buttress the longer term programmes with shorter national and EC plans laying down mid-term objectives which should be fixed and monitored jointly.

5.3. *Article 2—Definitions*

5.3.1. The Committee agrees with the definitions, which, however, only concern the following terms: CO₂ emission, Community CO₂ stabilization target, national CO₂ emissions objectives, national programme, and other greenhouse-gas emissions. The definitions are very brief and partial, and only explain the general meaning of the terms. Either here, in another Article or in the introduction, it would be useful to have a more concrete explanation of the content of the measures. Definitions of 'mid-term work plans' or 'mid-term deadlines' could also be inserted in line with the comments made on Article 1.

5.4. *Article 3—National and additional CO₂ emission programmes*

5.4.1. This Article only gives a general explanation of the possible content of the national programmes.

Further details of their content would be helpful with a view to drawing up the Community programme. Although details are available in other documents, they would be most useful for all concerned and would in no way undermine Member States' freedom to prepare and adapt the programmes to their particular circumstances. As regards the additional national programmes, it is not clear whether the reports refer solely to past activity (e.g. in 1990) or to full-scale programmes with commitments and measures to be undertaken in order to stabilize emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000. Yet again, they might be specific supplementary programmes to take account of different local and sectoral situations. The Committee feels that a more precise definition of the content and objectives of the two types of national programmes would help to make them easier to understand and add to their effectiveness.

5.4.2. In some countries environment policy is the responsibility of the regional authorities. If the monitoring system is to operate smoothly, effective cooperation must be secured from all the relevant authorities, especially in the regions. The Committee is concerned about this, and urges that the necessary provisions be adopted.

5.5. *Article 4—First evaluation of national programmes*

5.5.1. This gives a clear picture of the procedure for assessing national programmes, their dovetailing with Community action and any additional measures. It would be useful to clarify whether these additional measures are to be national, EC or both. In any case the use of both types of additional measures will be extremely helpful for attaining the stabilization target, with due regard for burden sharing. For the additional national measures, preference should be given to use of the committee procedure laid down in Article 8.

5.6. *Article 5—Inventory and data reporting*

5.6.1. The Committee is pleased that the EC and Member States are to prepare the inventory of emissions jointly, and that account is to be taken of progress made on international methods for emissions accounting. It also endorses the other parts of this Article.

5.7. *Article 6—Implementation of national programmes*

5.7.1. The Committee endorses the sending of a triennial report from the Commission to the Council

and Parliament surveying progress and problems in the Member States and in the Community as a whole. However, it urges that the Committee also be sent the report just as it has been sent the present proposal.

5.8. *Article 7—CO₂ emission monitoring and national energy policies review*

5.8.1. This is an important Article, designed to inte-

grate the data reporting 'as closely as possible' to the review process of national energy policies.

5.9. *Article 8—Consultative committee*

5.9.1. As a consultative body, this committee will play a significant part in forging contacts and the exchange of information, thus helping to avoid delays and disagreements, and facilitating cooperation, data reporting, and the implementation of the measures.

Done at Brussels, 28 January 1993.

*The Chairman
of the Economic and Social Committee*

Susanne TIEMANN

APPENDIX

to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee

Rejected amendment

The following amendment was rejected but received more than 25 % of the votes cast:

Paragraph 3.2.1

Replace all the words after the colon in the penultimate and last lines by the following:

'although these variations may appear to reflect oil price trends, a more significant factor for the stability over the earlier period was the shift of consumption from oil and coal to natural gas and nuclear energy while total energy consumption was increasing.'

Reasons

Self evident.

Voting

For: 18, against: 40, abstentions: 5.
