



Maximise resources to kick start the economy

Plenary sessions

The EU must make better use of resources for the sake of its future economic growth and the environment, according to a resolution adopted by Parliament on Thursday. Valuable materials should be recovered instead of landfilled or incinerated and taxation should penalise resource waste to help boost the EU's competitiveness, say MEPs.

"The European Parliament and the European Commission have laid down ambitious plans to tackle resource use. It is now up to the member states to pick up the gauntlet and fight for resource efficiency. Implementation of my report would mean economic growth, creation of jobs and protection of the environment. What are we waiting for?" said rapporteur Gerban-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE, NL) after the resolution was adopted with 479 votes in favour, 66 against and 63 abstentions.

Landfills and incineration

Parliament's resolution calls for a gradual phase-out of landfill of waste and calls on the Commission to make proposals to that effect by the end of 2014. The Commission should also revise the 2020 recycling targets set in the Waste Framework Directive and ensure, by the end of the decade, that there is no incineration of waste that could be recycled or composted.

EU industry and consumers stand to gain from better designed products, say MEPs, who call on the Commission to propose an update to the eco-design directive to include non-energy related products and to demand better durability, recyclability and reparability of goods. Labelling should also provide consumers with guidance on resource use and environmental impact.

Taxation and subsidies

Parliament urges Member States to shift towards environmental taxation, which MEPs say should allow cuts in other taxes, such as those on labour. Incentives, such as reduced VAT on certain secondary materials, could also help to correct market failures and promote innovation.

MEPs also call on the Commission and member states to come forward with plans to eliminate environmentally-harmful subsidies by 2020, echoing previous Parliament resolutions.

The public sector can play a further part by tightening rules on "green public procurement", say MEPs, who call on the Commission to look into applying such environmentally-friendly conditions on EU-funded projects.

Resource efficiency plans

To expand improvements in resource use, MEPs call on the Commission to create task forces to develop European Resource Efficiency Action Plans in the areas of food and drink, housing, and mobility.

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