



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

2011/2068(INI)

26.1.2012

OPINION

of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on a resource-efficient Europe
(2011/2068(INI))

Rapporteur: Kent Johansson

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses the importance of resource efficiency to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy; underlines the fact that decoupling real economic growth from resource consumption, notably of materials, is essential to improve Europe's industrial competitiveness and reduce its current relative dependence on imported resources, in particular raw materials; believes that the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation should play a vital role in this respect; calls on the Commission to provide further details as to how the Member States' progress towards greater resource efficiency will be assessed, in concrete terms, as part of the European Semester process; calls on the Member States to adopt national resource efficiency roadmaps which include specific measures and targets, in line with the objectives of the EU Roadmap;
2. Points out that water is a vital resource that needs to be protected and managed efficiently in the EU; takes the view that, given that drainage basins are mostly on the territory of several Member States, joint investment is needed for water management;
3. Points out that the success of resource efficiency policy greatly depends on its being consistent with all relevant internal and external EU policies and on the political commitment of Member States to implementing it; urges the Commission to propose clear, measurable and verifiable targets as well as indicators and measures – including specific objectives and concrete legislative initiatives, which should be underpinned by the necessary funds and financial mechanisms – so as to ensure that the flagship proposal is successful; asks the Commission to ensure that the roadmap for a resource-efficient Europe is consistent with the EU raw materials strategy;
4. Supports the Commission's idea of shifting the tax burden away from labour towards energy and environmental taxation; believes, however, that in many sectors a tax on mineral resources is not an adequate fiscal tool for increasing resource efficiency; welcomes the intention to encourage Member States to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies (EHS) more quickly by preparing plans and timetables and to report on those as part of their National Reform Programmes; notes that this should be achieved in a way that does not harm the EU's competitiveness or increase the risk of carbon leakage; urges the Member States to promote new technologies and sustainable growth by, inter alia, ensuring that their public procurement policies better reflect resource efficiency; believes that activities aimed at developing criteria and promoting the uptake of those criteria by public authorities should be strengthened;
5. Notes that indirect taxation or the removal of existing subsidies are not appropriate tools for increasing resource efficiency, as they may lead to negative externalities in various sectors and raise social equity concerns; points out that any increase in the total cost of raw materials may also result in investment being taken out of the EU;
6. Recalls that resource efficiency should aim to help the EU boost its technical performance

with a view to extracting more from raw materials throughout the value chain (in the context of mining, processing, refining and recycling);

7. Highlights the fact that many industry sectors have substantially increased their efficiency in using resources, driven mainly by enormous price increases; stresses, however, that boosting resource efficiency requires a profound change in society's consumption patterns, together with changes in production which are performance- rather than trend-driven and are achievable through new solutions for efficient resource management and policies delivering the most benefits for the EU in terms of growth, jobs and energy security; calls, therefore, for:
 - investment in innovative business models;
 - extra attention to be given to the reuse of raw materials by investing in the design of products which function reliably over a longer period (from the time they are placed on the market until the end of their useful lives), which, once they wear out, are easy to deal with in terms of recycling and waste management, and which can easily be repaired and re-used;
 - investment in research on new sustainable mining and metals processing technologies;
 - extension of the scope of the eco-design directive, based on an impact assessment, to cover criteria such as resource efficiency, recycled material rates, durability and reusability and the full implementation of that directive;
 - the adoption of a top-runner programme as an effective incentive mechanism for improving performance;
8. Calls on the Commission to streamline resource efficiency within the 'Integrated Industrial Policy' and 'Innovation Union' flagship initiatives, which should include the development of long-term sectoral industrial strategies and policies needed to assist the transition to a low-carbon and resource- and energy-efficient economy;
9. Calls for swift implementation of the Waste Framework Directive and in particular of the waste hierarchy, which should aim at prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and other recovery over disposal methods whilst continuing progressively to reduce landfill;
10. Draws attention to the need for alternative products to be used, altering energy- and material-intensive consumption patterns whilst achieving the same level of performance, and the need for alternative raw and other materials to be used, making manufacturing processes less energy-intensive;
11. Notes that the surest way to achieve resource efficiency without hampering European industrial capability, growth potential and competitiveness, and to improve the availability and performance of the technologies required for more efficient resource use and greater economic competitiveness, is to invest in research, development and innovation; calls, therefore, for:
 - European R&D&I efforts to be aligned with resource efficiency objectives;

- sufficient funding to be allocated, as part of Horizon 2020 (under the programmes relating to societal challenges and industrial competitiveness) and in the context of specific instruments for SMEs, to research and innovation programmes focusing on resource efficiency and to research on new substitution materials;
12. Stresses the importance of using its own resources to make European industry more competitive and innovative; emphasises the role of new mining technologies in promoting sustainable mining;
 13. Calls on the Commission to produce, as quickly as possible, accurate life-cycle-based indicators for measuring resource consumption, so as to be able to design effective resource efficiency policies, adapt to future trends and manage real and artificial shortages of raw materials;
 14. Welcomes the publication by the Commission of the new Eco-Innovation Action Plan, as committed to in the Innovation Union plan, and calls for its sustained implementation;
 15. Notes that resource efficiency should not be an end in itself, but rather an indispensable tool for achieving development, growth, sustainability, competitiveness, employment and prosperity for EU citizens and businesses;
 16. Takes the view that natural materials, including enhanced wood and enhanced mineral materials, can be used successfully as substitutes for the building materials used today;
 17. Points out that a lack of end users is a major obstacle to the full recycling of differentiated municipal waste; takes the view that innovative technologies and financial support schemes for SMEs are essential in order for high-quality, market-driven products to be produced using these resources;
 18. Calls for the European Innovation Partnerships and Knowledge Innovation Centres envisaged in the field of raw materials to address not only the sustainable exploitation, management and recycling of resources, but also prevention, reuse and substitution;
 19. Calls on the Commission to investigate how resource efficiency in the EU's mining and processing industry can be boosted in order to increase competitiveness and sustainability, inter alia by promoting the uptake of new technologies and enhancing the production of by-products alongside base metals;
 20. Takes the view that Europe's resources should be managed in a more strategic and environmentally sound manner; believes that a greater effort should be made to manage existing resources in the EU, in particular minerals, metals and timbers as well as energy resources including fossil fuels; stresses the EU's potential ability to meet its own needs for raw materials, and calls for it to reduce its dependence on imports of raw materials produced by environmentally unsustainable methods;
 21. Takes the view that the industries in the Member States ought increasingly to rely on domestic raw materials; points out that the management of domestic resources should ensure that they are not wasted and that they are used for the benefit of local communities, for example through tax revenue or jobs in raw material processing plants situated near

the places in which they are used;

22. Underlines that, in order to ensure mineral resources security for the Member States, it is essential to work on the basis of sustainable development by protecting fossil fuel deposits, developing potential resources and coming up with a proper policy on the exploitation of mineral resources;
23. Stresses that the EU's forestry resources have great potential to contribute to its energy efficiency targets and offer a sustainable means of increasing energy efficiency in its building sector;
24. Urges the EU to promote the use of biomass, a renewable raw material, in the production and use of bio-sourced products;
25. Stresses the need to boost forestry protection in the EU and consolidate the associated risk prevention methods, given that forestry resources and the environmental qualities of wood represent considerable natural capital; calls for the establishment of financial instruments for the funding of forest-fire and parasite prevention measures; calls on the Commission, together with the timber industry, to examine the scope for specific measures aimed at the sustainable exploitation of forestry resources, in particular via pilot projects; advocates better use of the forestry measures already in place under the EU's various policies, in order to improve the economic value of forests and ensure greater availability of wood, for example through replanting work under rural development programmes;
26. Stresses the need to invest in the recycling of raw materials and rare earths, given that the mining, refining and recycling of rare earths have severe environmental consequences unless they are properly managed;
27. Stresses the importance of increasing checks on illegal exports of waste in order to retain valuable raw materials within the EU;
28. Highlights the increased global competition for resources and 'technology metals'; stresses that European political and technological leadership in global sustainable development, the EU's competitive position and the 'green jobs' potential in the EU are highly dependent on a secure supply of these imported resources; calls for the creation of European added value through the development of:
 - an EU industrial innovation policy based on the reduce, re-use, recycle and substitution principles;
 - a comprehensive strategy for a sustainable supply of raw materials to the EU, in particular rare earths and elements, including from EU sources; notes that this strategy should also include an EU trade policy based on transparency, reciprocity and respect for democracy, the environment and sustainable development in exporting countries;
29. Calls for additional attention to be devoted to innovative technologies making it possible to recover and reuse valuable raw materials, such as landfill mining and urban mining;
30. Calls on the Commission to strengthen advisory services on resource efficiency, particularly for SMEs, for example by consolidating such programmes administered by

the European Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI); calls on the Commission to support SMEs in this area by promoting the sharing of best practice among Member States and providing access to relevant research under FP7 and Horizon 2020;

31. Stresses the importance of skills and training; calls on the Commission and the Member States to engage in close dialogue with the social partners, academia and industry in this context; calls on the Commission and the Member States, in collaboration with industry and academia, to support resource efficiency through special university programmes and scholarships; further supports, in that context, exchange programmes in this field, such as the Erasmus Mundus Minerals and Environmental Programme.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	25.1.2012
Result of final vote	+: 54 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Gabriele Albertini, Amelia Andersdotter, Zigmantas Balčytis, Ivo Belet, Bendt Bendtsen, Jan Březina, Reinhard Bütikofer, Maria Da Graça Carvalho, Giles Chichester, Jürgen Creutzmann, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Dimitrios Dritis, Christian Ehler, Vicky Ford, Gaston Franco, Adam Gierak, Norbert Glante, András Gyürk, Fiona Hall, Jacky Hénin, Kent Johansson, Krišjānis Kariņš, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Philippe Lamberts, Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, Angelika Niebler, Jaroslav Paška, Vittorio Prodi, Miloslav Ransdorf, Herbert Reul, Teresa Riera Madurell, Jens Rohde, Paul Rübig, Salvador Sedó i Alabart, Francisco Sosa Wagner, Konrad Szymański, Britta Thomsen, Evžen Tošenovský, Ioannis A. Tsoukalas, Claude Turmes, Vladimir Urutchev, Adina-Ioana Vălean, Alejo Vidal-Quadras
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Antonio Cancian, Francesco De Angelis, Seán Kelly, Werner Langen, Zofija Mazej Kukovič, Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Mario Pirillo, Vladimír Remek, Peter Skinner, Silvia-Adriana Țicău