

## **P5\_TA(2002)0014**

### **Integrated product policy**

#### **European Parliament resolution on the Commission Green Paper on integrated product policy (COM(2001) 68 - C5-0259/2001 - 2001/2117(COS))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission Green Paper (COM(2001) 68 - C5-0259/2001),
  - having regard to the Commission White Paper of 5 December 1993 on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment - the challenges and ways forward into the 21st Century (COM(1993) 700),
  - having regard to Rule 47(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy and the opinion of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (A5-0419/2001),
- A. whereas an integrated product policy which furthers sustainable development should not only be efficient in economic terms but should above all be effective from the environmental point-of-view and should contribute to social well-being both inside and outside the EU,
- B. whereas action is urgently needed to reverse unsustainable trends such as depletion of natural resources, climate change, diffuse emissions of hazardous chemicals and increasing generation of waste and in particular hazardous waste,
- C. whereas IPP could be a useful additional tool to legislation,
- D. whereas consumers exercise their freedom of choice not only on the basis of product quality but also on the basis of their purchasing power,
- E. whereas account should be taken of the close relationship which exists between the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme 2001-2010, the White Paper on Strategy for a future Chemicals Policy and the EU's strategy concerning an integrated product policy,
- F. whereas research and technological development programmes and the funding allocated thereto must be used to help implement the integrated product policy;
- G. whereas account should also be taken of the situation in the various Member States when drawing up an integrated product policy which is acceptable to them all,
- H. whereas an integrated product policy should be based on the responsibility of every player: producers for the design, production, marketing and end-of life of the product,

consumers for the purchase decision and the way the product is used and disposed of according to available facilities,

- I. whereas individual producer responsibility is essential for developing ecologically sound product design,
  1. Considers the Commission proposal to be unsatisfactory albeit interesting; believes that a more exhaustive and more cohesive policy proposal would be required which takes due account in a clearer manner of each link in the production chain, such as raw materials, energy consumption, packaging and transport; considers, however, that, with a view to establishing more precise and better coordinated bases from which to launch the proposal, a more exhaustive study should have been carried out into the achievements and failures of existing IPP policies (European eco-label, EMAS, New Approach legislation such as the directive on packaging, etc.); calls on the Commission to draw up more precise documents as a basis for Parliament's work, since this would save all the parties concerned a great deal of unnecessary work;
  2. Emphasises that the arrangements for awarding and monitoring a future European ecological label need to be specified more precisely;
  3. Presumes that the Commission will not submit a white paper on integrated product policy until it has carefully taken account of Parliament's views on the green paper;
  4. Regrets the absence of clear objectives with timetables for IPP as well as of methods and indicators for monitoring the achievement of IPP and calls on the Commission to develop these as a prerequisite for a successful IPP;
  5. Requests that IPP should aim at a significant reduction with clear timetables in the total environmental burden generated by the quantity and hazard of products in circulation;
  6. Stresses that IPP shall complement existing legal instruments and shall under no circumstances be used to replace or soften EC legislation;
  7. Calls upon the Commission to propose further legislation based on the principle of producer's responsibility following the implementation of this principle in the directives on end-of-life vehicles and waste from electrical and electronic equipment;
  8. Calls upon the Commission to propose further legislation based on the principle of producer's responsibility following the implementation of this principle in the directives on end-of-life vehicles and waste from electrical and electronic equipment;
  9. Calls on the Commission to critically assess the achievements and failures of New Approach legislation to see whether it supports the aims of IPP;
  10. Calls on the Commission to initiate appropriate pilot projects as soon as possible;
  11. Believes that, in view of the complexity of the process in which producers, consumers and governments are involved, it is important for the effect on business, education and social affairs to be taken into account during the process of developing the integrated product policy; in particular the integrated product policy must contribute to the

employment of a workforce whose knowledge enables it to engage and interact with sustainable development by means including participation in the development of knowledge and involvement in knowledge-based working;

12. Stresses the need for services to be included within the scope of the integrated product policy so that the undesirable effects which they have on the environment can be reduced; regrets that the increasingly large services sector has not been sufficiently addressed and recommends the environmental effects of services (especially transport and tourism) be subject to a similar approach;
13. Stresses the importance of clarifying the roles of the various actors, while arrangements for cooperation should remain at the discretion of the various groups concerned; emphasises that greater consideration must be given to environmental aspects when CEN and ISO standards are set and supports the continuation of the EHD (Environmental Held Desk) project at European level; emphasises that the incorporation of environmental concerns into European standardisation is an important element of an integrated product policy; strongly urges the Commission to ensure that all parties are properly represented in the standardisation process, including representatives of environmental and consumer organisations; encourages the Commission to present as soon as possible a proposal for a revision of the New Approach which ensures that environmental concerns are genuinely incorporated into standardisation, and which clarifies the nature of decisions of environmental policy, which could be addressed via standardisation, and which decisions should be left to the regulator to deal with in transparent democratic processes;
14. Points out that, as regards the use of their powers, governments should clearly specify their role and should establish minimum requirements for environmental indicators, clear targets and timetables; any voluntary agreements should be used as a steering instrument only if the objectives have been set by the regulator in a transparent democratic process which ensures public participation and if they are accompanied by adequate monitoring and the possibility for the State to impose sanctions; finally, the IPP and any voluntary agreements are not to replace but only to supplement existing and future legislation;
15. Points out that, as regards the use of their powers, governments should clearly specify their role and should establish minimum requirements for environmental indicators, clear targets and timetables; any voluntary agreements should be used as a steering instrument only if the objectives have been set by the regulator in a transparent democratic process which ensures public participation and if they are accompanied by adequate monitoring and the possibility on the part of the State of imposing sanctions; finally, the IPP and any voluntary agreements should not replace, but should only supplement existing and future legislation;
16. Considers that the constraints linked to the need to produce in a more ecological fashion should take into account the specificities of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), craft industries and traditional production methods;
17. Considers that the constraints linked to the need for more environmentally friendly production methods should take into account the specificities of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), craft industries and traditional production methods;

18. Maintains in this connection that, in order to reduce the cost of measures and not to exclude small and medium-sized businesses from the process, environmental indicators based on an assessment of products' simplified lifecycle should be established; stresses the importance of establishing precise and uniform parameters for such a lifecycle analysis; such indicators should be representative and consistent and should reflect the main environmental impact and the most significant environmental aspects of each product range; they should be established (e.g. by product panels) by agreement amongst the various groups concerned with a view to determining the most relevant indicators and establishing methods for measuring those indicators which, however, should be revised periodically and, if necessary, updated; it should be pointed out that LCA methods are still difficult to apply, particularly in terms of use of resources, time and analysis of the results; such difficulties increase significantly where small and medium-sized businesses are concerned and where there are structural differences between the various Member States (for example, differing combinations of energy sources);
19. Stresses the need to encourage companies to actively develop simple environmental indicators that can be easily used in international production networks and chains;
20. Stresses that, on the basis of a lifecycle analysis and reliable indicators, a framework can be established into which economic operators will independently grow as they incorporate environmental aspects into their strategic thinking, their product design and their actual production; responsible trading and the ability to innovate are important components of the integrated product policy concept;
21. Insists that product prices should accurately reflect the environmental costs of products and that eco-design products should be promoted. This should be achieved through the use of price mechanisms and through the adoption of measures promoting the internalisation of external costs (something which, alone, would encourage environmental improvements to products);
22. Considers that the inclusion of all environmental costs in the process of determining product prices should not cause the least-advantaged consumers to be excluded de facto from the market and that preference should therefore be given, over and above any penalty scheme, to appropriate instruments and measures designed to encourage both businesses and individuals, such as financial assistance (to enable production procedures to be adapted and brought up to standard) or tax incentives (lower VAT rates);
23. Suggests to the Commission that it investigate the possibility of pursuing IPP targets at OECD level as well as within the WTO, and recommends intensive cooperation between the Environment DG and the Trade DG on the WTO issue; expects the Commission to analyse the implications of global supply chains for IPP, IPP's role in developing countries and its compatibility with WTO rules, and to submit proposals for revisions of WTO rules if necessary;
24. Calls on the Commission to investigate the possibility of pursuing IPP targets at OECD level as well as within the WTO, and recommends intensive cooperation between the Environment DG and the Trade DG on the WTO issue; expects the Commission to analyse the implications of global supply chains for IPP, IPP's role in developing countries and its compatibility with World Trade Organisation rules, and to submit proposals for revisions of WTO rules if necessary;

25. Urges public authorities to facilitate the development of more environmentally friendly products by encouraging research in this field and disseminating the results thereof; believes that such research should include development of the retail chain towards meeting demand by selling a service rather than by selling the possession of a product;
26. Considers that measures should be implemented gradually and that the number of product categories involved should slowly be extended; all measures should help producers to become aware of the environmental impact of the products which they place on the market and thus indicate the scope for making environmental improvements to those products;
27. Calls for the concept of an integrated product policy to be developed for individual sectors and possibly for individual products, so that the concept can actually be put into practice;
28. Welcomes the fact that a workable integrated product policy based on research into the lifecycles of individual products exists in the Member States and considers that the experience so gained should be incorporated into a future White Paper and into future legislation;
29. Stresses that experience with the IPP concept or the experience gained in individual sectors within the Member States must be made available throughout the EU and that the interlinking and intensification of such activities should be promoted;
30. Points out that an integrated product policy is based on communication and cooperation between the various parties concerned; it is important for the target groups to be clearly defined so that communication tools, such as training for product developers, process operators as well as information for consumers, can be devised appropriately; such communication must be product-specific and geared to the specific requirements of a given product;
31. Recognises the need to draw up a long-term step-by-step educational strategy designed to guide producers and final consumers, with due consideration for the needs of children and young people; only the provision of further information to the general public will bring this about, for which reason producers/service providers should make key information regarding the entire lifecycle of their products/services available to consumers in a suitable fashion;
32. Points out that increased interaction between consumers, consumer organisations, retailers and manufacturers would help to strengthen consumers' rights and enable a greater amount of transparent, verifiable information to be made available;
33. Emphasises that the IPP concept should be transposed by means of existing Community law and that new instruments should be created only in order to fill gaps in the rules;
34. Stresses the need for environmental criteria to be incorporated into government procurement procedures;

35. Warns that consideration should be given to suitably combining the instruments proposed in the Green Paper so as to prevent the risk of duplication and conflict which could arise if they are all adopted together;
36. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.