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REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on the Environment,  
Public Health and Consumer Protection

on the Environment Summit in May 1985 and the OECD  
meeting in June 1985

Rapporteur: Mr Kenneth COLLINS

PE 95.810/fin.  
Or. En.



At its sitting of 11 February 1985, the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs WEBER and others on the European Environment Summit in May 1985 (Doc. 2-1484/84) pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy and the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment for opinions.

At its meeting of 20 December 1984 the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection decided to draw up a report and appointed Mr COLLINS rapporteur.

The committee considered the draft report at its meetings of 29 January, 27 February and 21 March 1985. At the last meeting it unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution as a whole.

The following took part in the vote: Mrs WEBER, Chairman; Mrs BLOCH von BLOTTNITZ, second Vice-chairman; Mr COLLINS, third Vice-chairman and rapporteur; Mrs BANOTTI, Mr BONACCINI (deputizing for Mr MORAVIA); Mr BOMBARD, Mr DUPUY, Mr ELLIOTT (deputizing for Mr SCHMID); Mr FALCONER (deputizing for Mr TOGNOLI); Mr IVERSEN, Mr HUGHES, Mrs Caroline JACKSON, Mr LAMBRIAS (deputizing for Mr ALBER); Mrs LENTZ-CORNETTE, Mr McMILLAN SCOTT (deputizing for Mr COTTRELL); Mr MERTENS, Mr MUNTINGH, Mr PEARCE, Mrs PEUS (deputizing for Mr PARODI); Mr ROELANTS du VIVIER, Mr SHERLOCK, Mrs SQUARCIALUPI, Miss TONGUE, Mr VITTINGHOFF, Mr WEDÉKIND (deputizing for Mrs SCHLEICHER).

The opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment is attached. The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy has decided not to deliver an opinion.

The report was tabled on 28 March 1985.

The deadline for tabling amendments to this report will be indicated in the draft agenda for the part-session at which it will be debated.

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

A

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

calling for the European Parliament to offer advice to the Environment Summit in May 1985 and the OECD meeting in June 1985

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs WEBER and others on the Environment Summit in May 1985 and the OECD meeting in June 1985 (Doc.2-1484/84),
  - having regard to the Action Programmes on the environment that have been produced by the Commission in 1973, 1979 and 1983,
  - having regard to the various statements and opinions that have been made by the European Parliament on environmental matters,
  - having regard to the priorities in the field of the environment that have been supported by the European Council, in particular at its meeting of 17-19 June 1983 in Stuttgart,
  - having regard to the meeting of Environment Ministers of Summit countries held in London on 17 December 1984,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection and the opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment (Doc. A 2-7/85),
- A. whereas it is the desire of the European Parliament in this report to produce a general outline of strategy rather than a detailed list of policies,
- B. considering that environmental issues are gaining an increasingly prominent place in the public eye as higher standards of protection of the environment are demanded,

- C. whereas the long-term competitiveness of industrialised nations could be enhanced by the development of environmentally sensitive technology and a common programme of action for protection of the environment, including the integration of environmental considerations into other policy areas,
1. Welcomes the fact that the seven industrialised nations and the OECD will be discussing the environment at their respective meetings in May and June;
  2. Hopes that all industrialised nations will recognise that environmental problems are truly international matters of paramount importance and that it is in their economic interest to act swiftly;
  3. Stresses the need to be forward-looking, even if this means taking action before environmental damage is actually apparent - it is always cheaper to anticipate and prevent than to react and cure; believes that environmental impact assessment is an essential aspect of this and should be made compulsory for every major new project;
  4. Takes the view that investigations must be carried out into the impact on human health and the natural environment of new technologies such as biotechnology, nuclear fusion and micro-electronics (technological impact assessment) before they are used on an industrial scale;
  5. Considers that the European Communities' Third Action Programme on the Environment should be recalled, in particular where it is stated that "the resources of the environment are the basis of but also constitute the limits to further economic and social development and the improvement of living conditions";
  6. Believes that the summit and the OECD meetings should therefore recognise that environmental policy is part of the foundation of the fight against unemployment and for economic recovery;
  7. Considers it essential that industry be made aware of how natural resources can be more efficiently used;
  8. Believes that by setting high environmental standards an incentive for technological innovation would be created, leading to the development of cleaner, more efficient technologies;

9. Believes that alongside high levels of environmental quality, the "polluter-pays" principle should be developed and applied more widely;
10. Believes that it is necessary to introduce product liability in this connection also, to be binding on manufacturers;
11. Considers that the world's economic leaders have a powerful influence on the rest of the world: believes that they must integrate environmental aspects into development policy;
12. Notes with regret the global problems of desertification and deforestation for which the industrialised nations must take their share of responsibility;
13. Supports action on North-South problems; believes that if due care and attention is not paid, no solution to these problems is likely to be found and the economies of the industrialised nations will suffer in the long-term;
14. Calls for further measures to be taken in the following specific areas, which have particular international significance:
  - atmospheric pollution
  - soil pollution
  - marine and freshwater pollution and pollution of groundwater
  - high standards in industrial plants (wherever they are located in the world)
  - transfrontier shipment of waste
  - deep seabed mining
  - exploitation of the Antarctic
  - endangered species and natural habitats
15. Asks industrialised nations to review their policy on the exportation of pesticides in view of their detrimental effects on the environment;
16. Calls on industrialized nations to recognize their responsibility to protect the urban environment; calls for more effective action in this area;

17. Warns against the risk of upholding fine principles on the environment, while taking no concrete action to put these principles into practice;
18. Calls on the Heads of State or Government of the seven major Western industrialized nations to decide, at their meeting in May 1985, on practical measures to reduce environmental pollution in the countries which they govern and not to foist their responsibility on to international organizations;
19. Calls therefore on all nations to implement the strategies laid down in reports such as the World Conservation Strategy and the UNEP State of the Environment; calls on all nations to publish details of how they are implementing these policies;
20. Considers that there is justification for placing the maximum pressure on countries which fail to comply with international environmental standards;
21. Calls for appropriate resources to be made available to implement these policies, bearing in mind the economic benefits to be derived in the long term from sound economic management;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and Council and to the Heads of State and Government taking part in the environmental summit in May 1985.



EXPLANATORY STATEMENTThe importance of the Environment Summit  
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1. The fact that the seven industrialised nations and the OECD have chosen to discuss the environment at their forthcoming meetings reflects the growing awareness of the fundamental importance of environmental policy. It is becoming increasingly apparent that environmental concerns can no longer be regarded as an afterthought, to be dealt with only after problems of agricultural policy, industrial policy, energy policy, transport policy or development policy have been resolved. Therefore, it is clear that environmental policy needs to be pushed into the heart of any discussion of these problems; all of them have an impact on the environment, and in the long run environmental damage will have an impact on each policy area.

2. In their statement following the London Summit in 1984, the world's leaders recognised the international dimension of environmental problems and the role of environmental factors in economic development.

Just as environmental concerns affect all areas of policy, environmental damage does not stop at international frontiers. It is clearly insufficient therefore for each country to have individual domestic policies on the environment. While recognising that different countries have different perceptions and different experiences of the severity of environmental damage, we would stress that environmental problems can only be seriously tackled by co-ordinated, multi-lateral action. There is an urgent need for greater international cooperation.

In the last twelve months, a number of international conferences have discussed the inter-relationship between the environment and economics (most notably the OECD conference on 'Environment and Economics; in June 1984). They have all come to similar conclusions, namely that economic improvement can be made compatible with environmental protection and, indeed, the two can be mutually reinforcing.

The World Conservation Strategy (1980) laid out most clearly the arguments challenging the traditional notion that conservation could be a bar to economic development. The WCS is based on the idea that economic

improvement is not possible unless we conserve our natural resources. The European Communities' Third Action Programme on the Environment (1982-86) states quite clearly that 'the resources of the environment are the basis of - but also constitute the limits to - further economic and social development and the improvement of living conditions'.

#### Public opinion and the environment

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3. The interdependence of the environment and economics is confirmed by changing attitudes in public opinion. There is no doubt that people are becoming more environment conscious. Even during economic recession, public demand for better environmental quality has remained high and in many areas has, indeed, increased. In a sense, therefore, investment in the environment should be seen as an investment in the future. Certainly it is in the interests of industrialised nations' competitiveness in the long-term to develop technology and production techniques which are sensitive to the environment, since this is what people are going to want to 'buy'.

#### The impact on industry

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4. Until fairly recently, environmental factors were seldom taken into account by industrialists and economic planners. Now, however, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the costs of pollution far outweigh the costs of fighting or preventing environmental damage. In fact, our aim must be to move towards a policy of anticipating and preventing damage rather than simply reacting to existing problems and attempting to solve them.

To this end, we must support the use of environmental impact assessments for all major new projects, and this must not just apply to industrial concerns, but to agricultural developments, to transport schemes, indeed, to any major proposal for significant change. Evidence suggests, moreover, that companies themselves benefit in the long run from integrating environmental concerns into their calculations of costs and profit margins.

5. We have already noted that the rational use of natural resources is necessary to future economic development. Once this precept has been

generally accepted at government level, it is essential that industry be informed of environmental policy requirements and of possible ways of applying them. Much more can be done in this area. For example, at present, considerable wastage results from industries not making full use of mineral resources. Many industries simply throw away what is not necessary to their own production, so creating waste. What is not useful to one industry, however, could be used profitably by other sectors. Because there is frequently little co-ordination between sectors of industry, those resources are not fully exploited at present. Better information is clearly crucial if industry is to be made aware of the potential for improved efficiency through such measures.

6. Industrial society will be undergoing important structural changes in the coming years as new technology is developed. It is important that we respond to environmental requirements during this period. Already, energy consumption has fallen in industrialised countries in terms of output per person per hour (20% less than a decade ago according to one estimate, although it must be noted that some of this has been due to the world recession). We believe however that more thought could be given to output per unit of resource used. Scientific research can undoubtedly make an important contribution to the search for even more efficient ways of exploiting our natural resources. Setting high standards for the environment can act as a stimulus for greater innovation in the scientific and technological field and will lead to the most rapid development of cleaner, more efficient technologies.

7. If we set higher environmental standards, these must be adhered to. Clearly, the costs of the structural changes that will sometimes be necessary may be considerable. It is important that the polluters should bear the costs of pollution control and that they should gain no short term trade advantage over competitors by ignoring standards. We would wholeheartedly support the conclusions of the OECD's conference on 'Environment and Economics' where it called for the 'consistent application and extension of the Polluter Pays principle'.

#### Environment and development policy

8. Environmental problems in industrialised nations are mirrored and often magnified in the Third World. Many Third World countries are undergoing rapid industrialisation, but all too often the environmental implications of this are given scant attention. The result, as many surveys have

shown, is spreading deforestation and desertification. Estimates suggest that at least 12.5% of the world's forests will be lost by the year 2000, and according to the UNEP State of the Environment report 1984, each year 21 hectares of agricultural land deteriorates through desertification to a point where it is no longer economically productive.

Poverty in the Third World cannot be separated from environmental destruction. Firstly, developing countries are forced to deplete the resources on which they depend in order to secure food, shelter and fuel. In Black Africa, for example, 80% of non-commercial energy comes from firewood. Secondly, however, demand from industries in the developed countries leads to more and more exploitation of natural resources in order to pay off external debts.

Industrialised countries must take their share of the responsibility for environmental problems in the Third World, as they consume most of the world's resources. It is vital that the industrialised world should start taking account of the impact of their policies on Third World development. We strongly urge that environmental factors be integrated into the development policy of industrialised nations. In granting aid to the Third World, much greater weight should be given to projects which help environmental conservation, and we see no reason why the principle of environmental impact assessment should not be extended to developing nations.

Inappropriate agricultural practices, which have contributed to the expanding area of deserts in the world, could be more strictly controlled. Evidence would appear to suggest that one of the major causes of desertification is the excessive use of chemicals and pesticides in farming. We would therefore ask industrialised nations to review their policy on the exportation of pesticides to Third World countries.

If no solution to these problems is found, the economies of industrialised nations will suffer in the long-term. The UNEP State of the Environment report for 1984 notes for example the dependence of the pulp, paper and furniture industries in the developed world on sustained exploitation of tropical forests. Similarly, the pharmaceutical industry depends on the continuing availability of genetic resources which are directly threatened by the current rate of deforestation (see also p. 9 (h)).

#### Specific areas of action -----

9. We have asked for further measures to be taken in certain specific

areas. While emphasising the importance of these areas, we would stress the need for a global approach to all environmental problems which are in themselves interdependent.

(a) Atmospheric pollution.

Responsibility for this lies heavily with the industrialised nations. The consequences are all too apparent in terms of dying forests and may be irreversible if not resisted immediately. Some measures have already been approved by this Parliament. It is essential now that their implementation be monitored, and that research should continue into new ways of using energy more efficiently and without damaging the environment.

(b) Soil Pollution.

Much more action can be taken in this area. In particular, we need to re-examine our agricultural practices. Intensive farming, monoculture, and excessive use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides are rapidly polluting our soil and water resources. Indeed, estimates are that within 20 years the corn belt of the USA could be unfarmable unless a more environmentally-sensitive approach is used. The consequences on the world economy are almost unimaginable.

(c) Marine and Freshwater Pollution.

A much stricter approach is necessary in this area, in particular in relation to the control of pollution of our waters by dangerous substances. A concerted effort is needed on maintaining high standards of safety as far as oil-carrying vessels are concerned. This should include a review of the qualifications and training of the personnel involved.

(d) High Standards in Industrial Plants.

The need for more international cooperation in laying down and enforcing more stringent standards was highlighted by the recent tragic disaster in Bhopal. Again, it is up to the industrialised nations to take the initiative for more action, and not only within their own territory.

(e) Transfrontier shipment of waste

The Mont Louis incident last year demonstrated just how urgently we need measures for enforcement of conventions and agreements that exist in this area. Quite apart from the long-term effect of pollution on the ecological balance, there is also a long-term effect on the economy, for example, for example in tourist industry, which is particularly vulnerable to accidents polluting our coasts and attractive areas of countryside.

(f) Deep Seabed Mining.

Very little research has been carried out as yet into the possible effects of deep seabed mining on the open ocean ecosystems. Once again, international cooperation is very important if we are to appreciate the risks deep seabed mining might present to the environment and this is another area where the industrialised countries have a responsibility to the Third World.

(g) Antarctica.

Insufficient attention has been paid to the environmental consequences of natural resource exploitation in the Antarctic. We would strongly back the World Conservation Strategy's position in calling for stricter controls on the exploitation of living resources from the Southern oceans.

(h) Endangered species and natural habitats.

Estimates of the harmful effects of desertification and deforestation on the world's genetic resources are horrifying. The problem does not only concern developing countries: Europe, too, is losing species of animals and plants at a devastating rate.

Protection of these endangered species makes sense economically as well as environmentally. The world's economy depends on the maintenance of genetic diversity. New sectors such as the biotechnology industry will be affected by the loss of wild species (as well as those already mentioned such as the pharmaceutical industry). The agricultural sector is most at risk however. The genetic base of the world's crops is narrowing because of high performance. However the average lifetime of wheat and other

cereal varieties used in Europe and North America is only 5-15 years (because of pests, diseases, climates and soils) so crops are made extremely vulnerable by the destruction of potential replacements.

#### The need for implementation

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10. Probably the most important point we need to make is that action is needed now. In certain cases it may be tempting to await scientific certainty of environmental damage to come or the causes of existing damage, (the most obvious example at the present being the question of possible climatic change brought about by excessive carbon dioxide in the atmosphere destroying the ozone layer). Very often, by the time we have conclusive scientific evidence of the damage, it may be too late and global disaster could be inevitable.

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of implementing policies. It is all too easy to have fine declarations of principle and to take no action to put these principles into practice. Principles which exist but are not put into practice are in fact extremely dangerous, because they give the mistaken impression that something is being done. We would therefore strongly urge all nations to implement the strategies laid down in the reports of the UNEP and the World Conservation Strategy.

The annual UNEP State of the Environment reports could be used as the basis for evaluating progress in the implementation of environmental policies. To ensure that action is being taken, however, we would request that every nation publish details of how they are implementing these policies.

Implementation is of course difficult without adequate resources. In view of the importance of environmental policy to future economic improvement, we believe that sufficient resources should be allocated to meet the demands of measures designed to protect the environment.

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 2-1484/84)

tabled by Mrs WEBER, Mrs SCHLEICHER, Mr COLLINS, Mrs BLOCH von BLOTTNITZ, Mr ROELANTS du VIVIER, Mrs LENTZ-CORNETTE, Mrs SQUARCIALUPI and Mr SHERLOCK pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure on the European Environment Summit in May 1985

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the Action Programmes on the environment that have been produced by the Commission in 1973, 1979 and 1983,
  - B. having regard to the various statements and opinions that have been made by the European Parliament on environmental matters,
  - C. having regard to the priorities in the field of environment that have been supported by the European Council at several meetings,
  - D. having regard to the preparatory meeting of Ministers of Summit countries held in London on 17 December 1984,
  - E. having regard to the forthcoming environment meeting of the seven industrialised nations in May 1985,
  - F. aware of the importance of this meeting to the possibility of economic recovery,
1. Considers that at that meeting the text of the EEC Paris Summit of 1972 should be recalled in particular where it stated that 'the resources of the environment are the basis of, but also constitute the limits to further economic and social development and the improvement of living conditions';
  2. Believes that the Summit should therefore recognise that environment policy is part of the foundation of the fight against unemployment and for economic recovery;
  3. Recommends that maximum pressure should be exerted on countries which fail to respect legislation on environmental protection;
  4. Considers that the European Commission and the European Parliament should prepare a set of proposals that could be adopted by the seven industrialised nations as being their priorities for the linking of environment policy and economic development;
  5. Calls upon Parliament and Commission to do so without delay.



O P I N I O N

(Rule 101 of the Rules of Procedure)

of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment

Draftsman of the opinion: Mrs SQUARCIALUPI

At the meeting of 20 March 1985, the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment appointed Mrs Squarcialupi draftsman of the opinion.

At the meeting of 20 March 1985, the committee considered the draft opinion and unanimously adopted its conclusions.

The following took part in the vote: Mr Welsh, chairman; Mr McCartin, vice-chairman; Mrs Squarcialupi, substitute and draftsman of the opinion; Mrs Banotti (deputizing for Mr Chanterie), Mr H. Christiansen, Mr Ciancaglini, Mrs Daly (deputizing for Mr Tuckman), Mr Fitzgerald, Mrs Larive-Groenendaal, Mrs Lemass (deputizing for Mrs Chouraqui), Mrs Maij-Weggen, Mrs Marinaro (deputizing for Mr Raggio) and Sir Jack Stewart-Clark.

## A. INTRODUCTION

1. In May and June respectively the seven most highly industrialized countries of the world and OECD member countries will hold meetings devoted to environmental protection and the economic aspects of an environmental policy and a policy for the prudent management of resources.
2. These meetings are the follow-up to the declarations issued at the last London Summit of the most highly industrialized countries and the June 1984 OECD Conference in Paris on the economy and the environment, both of which arrived at the conclusion that economic development should go hand in hand with environmental improvements and that environmental protection is one of the factors of development and employment.
3. On the occasion of these two important international summits, the European Parliament therefore wishes to express its views as requested in the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs Weber and others pursuant to Rule 47 (Doc. 2-1484/84).

## B. CONCLUSIONS

4. The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment invites the committee responsible to incorporate a number of points in the final resolution emphasizing the social and employment implications of a proper environmental policy at this time of crisis for Europe.
5. There is ample proof that sooner or later any type of pollution and improper use of the environment have negative repercussions on employment and the economy in that they can lead to job losses and high costs as a result of civil conflict and cause and aggravate illnesses which, like those caused by atmospheric pollution, attack the respiratory system, lead to a high rate of absenteeism and confront society with high health costs.
6. It has also been predicted that an economic upturn would put greater pressure on environmental resources by increasing the cost of the damage unless adequate protective measures are taken. There is therefore an urgent need for new environmental policies.

7. On the other hand greater attention to the environment has positive repercussions on the quality and quantity of employment as well as stimulating scientific research and technological innovation.
8. Environmental protection measures can lead to new types of jobs connected with the clean technologies and can better meet the job requirements of young people. But it is to be hoped that the European Social Fund will provide an incentive in this direction.
9. Various European experiments and studies carried out by the Commission on 'environment and employment' have shown that less has to be invested to create jobs in the environmental protection sector than in other sectors. Other macro-economic studies carried out by the Commission have shown, more particularly, that a waste policy at European level will lead to the creation of more than one million jobs in the next ten years.
10. It should also be noted that in all countries the environmental protection industry is becoming increasingly important; turnover and number of employees increase each year and large commercial events have already been organized in Europe. Consideration should be given in this connection to a European certificate indicating quality and conformity with Community norms and objectives in order to prevent irregularities, speculation and results that conflict with Community decisions on environmental matters.
11. Consulting the people, as many European countries do over certain environmental issues, can lead to better and clearer relations between people and institutions and enable the citizens to take a more responsible stance on major issues, a fact that should not be underestimated.
12. Pending a decision by the Council of Ministers on the directive on the assessment of environmental impact, it would be as well to extend the concept of impact to the social sector and thus to the consequences that a major public or private initiative could have for living and working conditions. Such an initiative could take the form of the construction of a large industrial plant in an agricultural area, which would change the activities of the population, as can happen when traditional crops

are replaced by single crops. The social and environmental aspects thus become increasingly bound up with each other.

13. It is at all events essential to exert constant pressure on the Commission so that it implements its economic programme, i.e. stimulates investment in the environmental sector, whilst ensuring that investments in other sectors such as town planning and transport infrastructures do not have adverse implications for the environment.