



# Community programme of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development

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Over the past two decades four Community action programmes on the environment have given rise to some 200 pieces of legislation covering pollution of the atmosphere, water and soil, waste management, safeguards in related to chemicals and biotechnology, product standards, environmental impact assessments and protection of nature.

While a great deal has been achieved under these programmes and measures, a combination of factors now calls for a more far-reaching policy and more effective strategy. Just as the challenge of the 1980s was the completion of the internal market, so the reconciliation of environment and development is one of the principal challenges facing the Community and the world in the 1990s.

The new programme will address, amongst others, such issues as acidification and air pollution, depletion of natural resources and biodiversity, depletion and pollution of water resources, deterioration of the urban environment and of coastal zones. Regarding these issues as symptoms of mismanagement and abuse more than as problems, the programme's philosophy is that the underlying root of environmental problems is the current pattern of human consumption and behaviour. With this

distinction in mind, priority will be given to:

- Sustainable management of natural resources;
- Integrated pollution control and prevention of waste;
- Reduction in the consumption of nonrenewable energy;
- Improved mobility management;
- Improvement of environmental quality in urban areas;
- Improvement of public health and safety.

Equally, the sectors of industry, energy, transport, agriculture and tourism have been selected for special attention.

In order to increase the impact of the programme by involving all sectors of society, legislative instruments (up until now used almost exclusively) shall be complemented by market-based instruments, horizontal supporting instruments and financial support mechanisms. The new strategy advanced in this programme also implies the involvement of all economic and social partners (bottom-up) rather than relying only on legislative intervention (top-down) as has been the case up to the present in Community environmental protection policies.

While the programme is essentially targeted towards the year 2000, it will be reviewed at the end of 1995 in the light of improvements in relevant data, results of current research and forthcoming reviews of other Community policies in industry, energy, transport, agriculture and the structural funds.

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