



PRESS RELEASE

European Environmental Bureau

EEB welcomes European Parliament's critical assessment of progress on EU environmental policy

[Brussels, 10 April 2008] - Today, the European Parliament adopted a critical report about the progress made on EU environmental policies since 2002 and the next steps necessary. The European Environmental Bureau, the largest European federation of environmental citizens groups, welcomes the report evaluating the effects of the 6th Environmental Action Programme (2002-2012) [1] so far, as it is giving an honest picture of progress, weaknesses and risks and gives a clear direction for the coming years.

John Hontelez, Secretary General EEB, said, "Parliament rightly warns that the EU is not going to achieve its goal of halting the decline of biodiversity by 2010, nor its objectives on reducing natural resource use and waste, and that its health protection objectives have been compromised in the REACH legislation on chemicals."

Parliament has expressed its belief "that wider use of market based instruments, taking the environmental impact of all production and distribution processes and consumption patterns into consideration, is needed".

John Hontelez agreed, saying, "Parliament rightfully points to the need for EU action on environmental tax reform by combining the "Open Method of Coordination" and "Enhanced Cooperation", two tools to overcome the Treaty requirement of unanimity for tax-related decisions. Such action is necessary to make sure that through such reforms, prices start reflecting real environmental costs and at the same time reducing the costs of labour."

The EEB also strongly welcomes the call on the EU budget authorities to ensure the Commission will have all the necessary financial and human resources to ensure that the "most efficient monitoring of implementation and enforcement of existing legislation is carried out in all Member States."

John Hontelez commented, "Indeed, DG Environment does not have sufficient means of enforcing the EU environment acquis as it should. This should change, not at the expense of other tasks, but as a result of increased resources."

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Notes:-

[1] The 6th Environmental Action Programme (6EAP) sets out the framework for environmental policy-making in the European Union for the period 2002-2012 and outlines actions that need to be taken to achieve them. The 6th EAP identifies four priority areas: climate change; nature and biodiversity; environment and health; and natural resources and waste.

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