


# Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) <a href="#">1996/2254(COS)</a>	Procedure completed
Air pollution: strategy for reducing methane emissions	
Subject 3.70.02 Atmospheric pollution, motor vehicle pollution	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<b>ENVI</b> Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection		05/02/1997
		GUE/NGL <a href="#">MARSET CAMPOS Pedro</a>	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	<b>AGRI</b> Agriculture and Rural Development		
	<b>ENER</b> Research, Technological Development and Energy		06/02/1997
		PSE <a href="#">STOCKMANN Ulrich</a>	
Council of the European Union			

Key events			
15/11/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0557	Summary
15/01/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
18/03/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
18/03/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A4-0120/1998</a>	
01/04/1998	Debate in Parliament		
02/04/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0214/1998	Summary
02/04/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
04/05/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1996/2254(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/08447

## Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	COM(1996)0557	15/11/1996	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	<a href="#">A4-0120/1998</a> <a href="#">OJ C 138 04.05.1998, p. 0015</a>	18/03/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T4-0214/1998 <a href="#">OJ C 138 04.05.1998, p. 0143-0181</a>	02/04/1998	EP	Summary

## Air pollution: strategy for reducing methane emissions

OBJECTIVE: following a request from the Environment Council in December 1994 the purpose of the Commission communication is to examine the problems relating to atmospheric methane emissions, identify the main emissions sources and sinks, introduce some cost-effective means to reduce these emissions and propose a set of potential measures for incorporating into a Community emissions mitigation strategy. SUBSTANCE: at both the Community and international level it has been recognised that a methane (greenhouse gas second to carbon dioxide) reduction policy could be an important element of an overall climate change strategy. The Commission therefore proposes a series of options to reduce methane emissions which are derived almost entirely from agriculture (45%), waste (32%) and energy (23%). - In the agriculture sector the Commission suggests developing equipment for the conversion of animal manure into energy (anaerobic digesters or simple covered lagoons). Initially these technologies would be tested through demonstration programmes and feasibility studies implemented at EU, national, regional and local level; at a later stage there would be a legal obligation to install recovery systems for large holdings; - In the municipal waste sector the Commission proposes: a) the promotion of general measures to reduce the quantity of organic material in waste as a whole and minimizing its production, separate collection, development of recycled products, composting; b) adoption of Community legislation requiring, in the absence of other options, that the new landfills are equipped with a methane recovery and use system; c) the adoption of Community legislation requiring the retrofitting of existing landfills with systems for the collection and use of methane wherever possible; - In the energy sector a Community recommendation should encourage Member States to generate programmes promoting the application of the best available technologies for those coal mines that will still be in operation beyond a certain time frame (10 years for instance). For natural gas the Commission proposes the drawing up of an EU minimum leakages standard and increased control frequency of pipelines at national level. These options will be discussed with all the interested parties so that practical measures can be adopted as quickly as possible. ?

## Air pollution: strategy for reducing methane emissions

A call for the establishment of a European Climate Agency was made by the Committee. The agency should coordinate public and private climate protection measures, the committee said in a motion for a resolution on a Commission communication proposing a strategy for reducing methane emissions into the atmosphere. The motion was contained in a report drafted under the consultation procedure by Mr Pedro MARSET CAMPOS (GUE/NGL, E). Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) traps heat and inhibits its release into space, thus contributing to the global greenhouse effect. Of the factors which contribute to global warming, methane is second only to carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Thirty per cent of methane comes from natural sources (eg wetlands), the rest resulting from human activity, particularly livestock rearing, the landfill of waste and burning fossil fuels. Other anthropogenic sources include rice cultivation, brush fires and coalmining. The aim of the Commission strategy is to reduce methane emissions in the EU to 30% of their 1990 levels by the year 2005 and to 41% by 2010. In its motion, the committee called on the Commission to submit a package of legislative, economic and social recommendations with a view to achieving a substantial reduction in methane emissions through practical proposals within a definite timescale. In particular, it wanted methane recovered, for use as a source of energy, from coal-mining, landfill and animal waste. Animal diets should be improved and livestock effluent needed to be managed. Education and the media should be used to increase public awareness of the need to reduce emissions: people must change their behaviour eg as regards waste disposal. European firms which helped cut methane emissions in third countries should enjoy tax concessions. The committee also wanted EU funds used to repair old pipelines leaking methane in the former Soviet Union.?

## Air pollution: strategy for reducing methane emissions

In adopting the report by Mr Pedro MARSET CAMPOS (GUE/NGL, E) Parliament welcomed the Commission communication and proposed the drawing up at European level of a range of regulations with a view to encouraging and promoting any actions which could have a direct or indirect effect on reducing methane emissions. Parliament also called on the Commission: - to draw up a detailed study assessing the scale and effects on the territory of the EU of methane emissions; - to make preparations for the establishment of a European climate agency as a means of coordinating public and private climate protection measures; - to give priority to repairs for old pipelines in the deployment of Community Funds in third countries, and in particular in the former Soviet Union; - to submit proposals on tax concessions for European undertakings that demonstrably contribute to reducing CH<sub>4</sub> emissions in third countries; - to adopt quantified reduction values for these emissions and to summarize the measures proposed by it in a qualified and timetabled action plan; - to submit innovative proposals concerning waste disposal legislation; - to take into account the problem of methane emissions in the assessment of the various proposals for the reform of the common agricultural policy; - to encourage greater public awareness through recommendations to the education sector. ?

