COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 28 January 1991

on the Green Paper on the urban environment

(91/C 33/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

1. welcomes the Green Paper on the urban environment and recognizes that it has made an important contribution to the ongoing debate on the future of the towns and cities of Europe;

2. recognizes the importance of taking this overview of urban environment questions given the very close relationship between environment and other issues in the urban context, it being understood, however, that consideration should be given both to the diversity of urban models and to the different specific starting situations in the Member States;

3. recognizes that, while in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity the primary responsibility for the definition of policy for, and the management of, the urban environment lies with local authorities, regions and national governments, there is a Community dimension to the development of future policy in this area.

   This dimension covers:

   (a) the impact on urban environment of Community policies in many areas, particularly those related to the preparation for, and establishment of, the single market, regional development, energy and transportation;

   (b) the very close interrelationship between those factors which are recognized as the cause of problems at the city level and those which give rise to contribution to global problems such as acid rain and the greenhouse effect; and the need therefore to ensure that solutions at the local level contribute to the solution of regional and global problems. Urban policies need therefore to be part of wider environmental policies;

   (c) the common nature of the problems facing cities, which underlines the value of cooperation and exchange of information between cities, in which the Community can assist in the search for effective solutions;

   (d) the importance of improving urban environments that are degraded or threatened by degradation, *inter alia* as a factor of social and economic cohesion within the Community;

   (e) recognition of the importance to the Community as a whole of the historic and cultural heritage that our cities represent.

4. recognizes that the solution of urban environment problems is an essential condition for the future sustainable development of our cities;

5. recognizes that a major element of a successful urban environment policy will be effective coordination of policies at all levels of public administration in the wide range of areas which have an impact on cities and towns;

6. underlines the importance of urban and regional planning as a framework of integration of decisions on land use, services and infrastructures. Within this context, the Council recognizes in particular the importance of tackling problems of traffic-related pollution, noise and congestion though greater integration of decisions on land-use and transportation planning. It encourages the Commission to give priority to such approaches within Community programmes of investment and research;

7. considers that the development and implementation of Community initiatives which concern the urban environment will require close ongoing coordination and invites the Commission to give active consideration as to how this can be achieved;

8. recognizes the value that exchange of experience and demonstration projects can play in improving the quality of urban management throughout the Community and encourages therefore the Commission to support such activities;

9. recognizes the importance of a reliable source of data as a guide to the development of urban environment policy and invites the Commission to consider how such a data base could be established and maintained within the Community. The European Environment Agency should play an important role in this respect;

10. requests that the Commission cooperate fully with other international organizations involved in urban issues to ensure that activities are complementary and not duplicative;

11. invites the Commission, in the light of the suggested lines of action set out in the Green Paper, to:

(a) establish an expert group made up of national representatives and independent experts to:

(i) consider, from an analysis of the existing situation throughout the Community, how future town and land-use planning strategies can incorporate environmental objectives; and

(ii) more generally, advise the Commission on the ways in which the urban environment dimension can be further developed within Community environment policy;

(b) consider, within the context of the European Council declaration on the environment (Dublin, June 1990), how the Community could, through funding, further contribute to the improvement of the urban environment;

12. welcomes the Commission's intention to consult widely within the Community on the ideas and proposals in the Green Paper and looks forward to a further presentation of the conclusions of that consultation and the proposals arising from it.