

European environmental economic accounts

2010/0073(COD) - 09/11/2010

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Jo LEINEN (S&D, DE) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European environmental economic accounts.

It recommended that the European Parliament's position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should be to amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Scope: Members stipulate that this Regulation must enable the Commission (Eurostat) to make reliable forecasts, based on comparable national data, about the environmental and economic situation of the individual Member States and the Union as a whole. They also state that it is of great importance that the European environmental economic accounts, as soon as the system is fully operational, are actively and accurately used in all relevant EU policy taking as a key input to impact assessments, action plans, legislative proposals and other significant products of the policy process.

Modules: in accordance with the Treaty of Lisbon delegated powers to the Commission should happen in accordance with Art. 290 of TFEU. This delegation of power should be restricted to the adjustment of modules and not encompass the introduction of new modules, since this would require a new legislative proposal in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure.

Development of new environmental account modules: an amendment proposed by the committee states that as a matter of priority, the Commission shall, in cooperation with the Member States, develop the following modules for inclusion into the scope of this Regulation

by the end of 2014:

- Environmental Protection Expenditure and Revenues (EPER)/Environmental Protection and Expenditure Accounts (EPEA), Environmental Goods and Services Sector (EGSS);
- Energy Accounts;
- Environmentally Related Transfers (subsidies) and Resource Use and Management Expenditure Accounts (RUMEA);
- Water Accounts (quantitative and qualitative) and Waste Accounts;
- Forest Accounts; and
- Ecosystem services Accounts.

Pilot studies: Members consider that pilot studies should also be used for the introduction of new environmental account modules in order to obtain experience in using this instrument at an early stage, with a possible view to expanding the scope of the regulation.

In carrying out the evaluation of the results of the pilot studies, the Commission shall ensure that no additional administrative or financial burdens are placed on respondents.

Data collection: Members clarify that the collection requirements should be clarified. The regional data are of the same importance as national data. They call, in accordance with the annexes of this Regulation, on Member States to collect the necessary data for the observation of the modules' characteristics referred to in this Regulation, at national and regional level as relevant. The Commission may adopt delegated acts to provide methodological guidance to facilitate the application of this provision.

Quality assessment: the Commission (Eurostat) shall assess the quality of the data transmitted and may, within a time-limit of one month, raise an objection and require the Member State in question to submit an improved report.

Feasibility and effectiveness: a new measure provides for the Commission to establish the feasibility and effectiveness of environmental economic accounts.

Delegated acts: the report specifies that the powers to adopt the delegated acts shall be conferred on the Commission for a period of five years following the entry into force of this

Regulation. The Commission shall make a report in respect of the delegated powers at the latest 6 months before the end of the five-year period.

Review: the Commission shall submit a report on the implementation of this Regulation to the European Parliament and the Council every three years. The report shall assess the possibilities for introducing new environmental account modules. The first report shall be submitted not later than 31 December 2013.

The report highlights that the Member States should regularly make available to the public information in a comprehensible form contained in environmental accounts by publishing it together with GDP data, for example.