

European environmental economic accounts

2010/0073(COD) - 07/06/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 616 votes to 26, with 24 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European environmental economic accounts.

It adopted its position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of a compromise negotiated between the European Parliament and the Council. They amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Sound information: the text underlines the need to develop instruments with a view to enhancing public awareness of the environmental effects of economic activity. Environmental economic accounts show the interaction between economic, household and environmental factors and consequently are more informative than national accounts alone. They provide a significant source of data for environmental decisions and the Commission should consult them when drawing up impact assessments.

Environmental tax: the text stipulates that ‘environmentally related tax’ means a tax whose tax base is a physical unit (or a proxy of a physical unit) of something that has a proven, specific negative impact on the environment, and which is identified in ESA-95 as a tax.

Modules: the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts, where necessary to take account of environmental, economic and technical developments and provide methodological guidance. The Commission shall ensure that its delegated acts do not impose significant additional administrative burdens on the Member States and on the respondent units.

Pilot studies: the Commission shall draw up a programme for pilot studies to be carried out by Member States on a voluntary basis in order to develop reporting and improve data quality, establish long time series and develop methodology. The programme shall include pilot studies to test the feasibility of introducing new environmental economic account modules. In drawing up the programme, the Commission shall ensure that no additional administrative or financial burdens are placed on the Member States and on the respondent units.

The findings of the pilot studies shall be evaluated and published by the Commission, taking into account the benefits of the availability of the data in relation to the cost of collection and the administrative burden of responding. These findings shall be taken into account in the proposals for introducing new environmental economic account modules that the Commission may include in the report referred to in the Regulation.

Quality assessment: in applying the quality criteria, the Commission shall adopt implementing acts with a view to defining the modalities, structure and periodicity of the quality reports. The Commission (Eurostat) shall assess the quality of the data transmitted and may, within one month of receipt of the data, request the Member State in question to submit additional information regarding the data or a revised dataset, as appropriate.

Derogations: the Commission may adopt implementing acts with a view to granting derogations to Member States during the transitional periods referred to in the Annexes insofar as the national statistical systems require major adaptations. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in this Regulation.

Delegated acts: the delegation of power shall be conferred on the Commission for a period of 5 years and shall be tacitly extended for periods of an identical duration, unless the European Parliament or the Council opposes such extension not later than three months before the end of each period. The Commission shall draw up a report in respect of the delegation of power not later than nine months before the end of the five-year period. The delegation of power may be revoked at any time by the European Parliament or by the Council.

A delegated act shall enter into force only if no objection has been expressed either by the European Parliament or the Council within a period of 2 months of notification of that act to the European Parliament and the Council or if, before the expiry of that period, the European Parliament and the Council have both informed the Commission that they will not object. That period shall be extended by 2 months at the initiative of the European Parliament or the Council.

Review: by 31 December 2013 and every three years thereafter, the Commission shall submit a report on the implementation of this Regulation to the European Parliament and the Council. That report shall evaluate in particular the quality of the data transmitted, the data collection methods, the administrative burden on the Member States and on the respondent units, as well as the feasibility and effectiveness of those statistics.

The report shall be accompanied by proposals:

- for introducing new environmental economic account modules, such as Environmental Protection Expenditure and Revenues (EPER)/Environmental Protection Expenditure Accounts (EPEA), Environmental Goods and Services Sector (EGSS), Energy Accounts, Environmentally Related Transfers (subsidies), Resource Use and Management Expenditure Accounts (RUMEA), Water Accounts (quantitative and qualitative), Waste Accounts, Forest Accounts, Ecosystem services Accounts, Economy-Wide Material Stock Accounts (EW-MSA) and the measurement of unused excavated earthen materials (including soil);
- designed to further improve data quality and data collection methods, thereby improving the coverage and comparability of data and reducing the administrative burden on business and administration.