

Protection of groundwater against pollution and environmental quality standards in the field of water policy

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The European Parliament adopted a legislative resolution **approving** the Council's position at first reading with a view to the adoption of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration and Directive 2008/105/EC on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy.

The proposal amending the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Environmental Quality Standards Directive (EQSD) and the Groundwater Directive (GWD) aims to update the annexes to these directives, which contain the list of pollutants and quality standards, to improve monitoring of chemical mixtures, streamline future updates according to scientific findings, improve access to, transparency and re-use of data and set new standards for a series of substances of emerging concern.

The main elements of the Council's position are as follows:

Watchlists

The watchlists for both groundwater and surface water are to be established by implementing act within **two years**, and revised every three years, thereafter. Member States are to monitor each substance or group of substances in the watch list at selected representative monitoring stations over a **24-month period**, with minimum monitoring frequencies (at least once a year for groundwater and twice a year for surface water).

The watchlists are capped at a maximum of **five substances** or groups of substances for groundwater and of **ten substances** or groups of substances for surface water. **Microplastics and indicators of antimicrobial resistance** will only be included provided that reliable methods of sampling and analysis are available. The Commission is tasked with developing such methods within 18 months.

Monitoring

In relation to the monitoring frequency of substances behaving like **ubiquitous persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic substances (uPBTs)**. Member States may monitor these substances less intensively than is required for priority substances, but such monitoring should take place **at least every three years**. Regarding seasonal variations in monitoring, Member States are to consider peaks of substance use when planning their monitoring. A voluntary encouragement for digitalisation of monitoring is also foreseen.

Effect-based monitoring is mandatory for **estrogenic substances** in surface water during a 2-year period, in order to allow the Commission to collect data. The Commission will set out the technical specifications for this monitoring by implementing act.

Joint Monitoring Facility

The Commission will assess the feasibility and then the possible establishment of the Joint Monitoring Facility. The use of the facility by Member States is voluntary.

Reporting

The Council's position includes the following: (i) reporting of water status will continue to take place within the six-yearly river basin management plans; (ii) monitoring data related to biological quality elements in surface waters must be reported **every 3 years**; (iii) monitoring data related to chemical quality elements in surface water and groundwater is to be reported every **two years**. The new reporting obligations should be fully aligned with existing electronic data delivery mechanisms.

Substances

Regarding PFAS, the sum of PFAS for groundwater is aligned with the Drinking Water Directive, which sets a quality standard (QS) for the sum of 20 PFAS. In addition, a **QS of 0.0044 g/l** for the sum of 4 PFAS which are recognised as posing a significant risk to human health and the environment is included for groundwater. For surface water, **one substance (TFA) is added** to the list and the Commission will consider whether TFA should have its own separate quality standard.

On pesticides, for groundwater, a QS for non-relevant metabolites of pesticides is simplified. In addition, the Commission will establish by implementing act a list of known pesticide metabolites. For surface water, the total pesticides environmental quality standard (EQS) is set for the sum of the pesticides that are already included in the list of priority substances to be monitored (except the four pesticides to be monitored in biota or sediment and glyphosate) with a value of 0.2 g/l for freshwater.

Bisphenol-A is designated as a priority hazardous substance, while **atrazine** is deselected.

New annexes introduce groups of substances (pesticides, pharmaceuticals, bisphenols) to be re-examined. In the future, the Commission will be able to set overall standards for these groups in surface and groundwater.

Extended producer responsibility

The Commission is to prepare a report, within 3 years of the entry into force of this amending Directive, to evaluate, in particular, the feasibility of imposing the obligation on producers that place products containing priority substances and priority hazardous substances on the EU market to contribute to the costs of monitoring programmes established in accordance with the WFD.