Environment : effects of public and private projects (amend. Directive 85/337/EEC)

1994/0078(SYN) - 06/10/1995

Pending delivery of Parliament’s opinion, the Council held a policy debate on certain major questions concerning the proposal for the amendment of Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. Directive 85/337/EEC is regarded as the principal Community instrument on the prevention of environmental damage at source. The amendments advocated are based on the experience acquired in the implementation of the Directive and also take account of the commitments entered into under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, which the Community and its Member States signed at Espoo on 25 February 1991. The proposal provides, *inter alia*: - for clarification of the scope of this Directive as regards, in particular, the types of project for which the obligation to carry out an assessment is not automatic but is a matter for decision on a case--by--case basis by the Member State concerned (projects in Annex II to the Directive), basing that decision on selection criteria defined at Community level such as the size of the project, its precise location, the production of waste or the risks of accidents; - for the specific content of the assessment, indicating, in particular, the nature of the information that must be presented by a developer; - greater cooperation between the Member States involved in projects that have transboundary effects. Detailed examination of the main problems outstanding enabled the Council to achieve a certain degree of progress, in particular as regards the definition of the projects to be subject to environmental impact assessment. In conclusion, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its proceedings in the light of the Council’s discussion and Parliament’s opinion with a view to the forthcoming meeting in December.