

Environment: assessment of effects of certain plans and programmes

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The Conciliation Committee reached agreement on a joint text for the directive. The main points of the agreement may be summarised as follows: - Monitoring of environmental effects: a separate article would be included obliging Member States to monitor the environmental effects of plans and programmes in order to identify possible adverse effects and thereby undertake appropriate remedial actions at an early stage; - Scope of the directive and inclusion of the Structural Funds: it was agreed that the temporary derogation from the scope of the directive for the Structural Funds and the Rural Development regulations would be limited until the end of the current programming period. Parliament also insisted on a clarification in the text that plans and programmes co-financed by the EC were covered by the directive, as this would affect Community financing for the accession countries. It was also agreed that the Commission would issue a report on the relationship between SEA and the Structural Funds, which would be taken into account when drawing up the Commission proposal for new Structural funds legislation; Transboundary consultation with third countries: it was agreed to add a recital referring to the ongoing negotiation at international level under the Espoo Convention regarding the transboundary aspects of environmental impact assessment. Furthermore, Member States were invited to inform third countries, on a reciprocal basis, about plans and programmes having an effect on the environment of those countries; Public consultation: under the compromise reached, when preparing plans and programmes, Member States would have to inform the public including relevant NGOs and give them the opportunity to express their opinion.