

Accidental or deliberate marine pollution: hydrocarbons or harmful substances, community framework for cooperation

1998/0350(COD) - 17/12/1999 - Council position

The proposal aims to establish a Community framework for cooperation in the field of accidental marine pollution. This framework is intended to support and supplement Member States' efforts for the protection of the marine environment, human health and coastlines against the risks for accidental pollution at sea and operational spills, and strengthen conditions for efficient mutual assistance and cooperation between Member States in this field. The main amendments made by the Council to the Commission's amended proposal are as follows: - time-framework: the time-framework is aligned on that of the financial perspectives and therefore extended from 5 years (as proposed by the Commission) to 7 years (2000-2006); - scope: for reasons of clarity, to take into account that the limited programme proposed cannot address all possible sources of pollution affecting the marine environment, directly or indirectly, and noting that continuous streams of pollution originating from land-based sources are normally regulated under other Community instruments, the instrument will address "risk for accidental or deliberate pollution at sea, excluding continuous streams of pollution originating from land-based sources". As regards harmful substances, the common position, while acknowledging the potential hazardous nature of dumped munitions notes: 1) that different competent authorities or Ministries are involved within Member States, and; 2) that the operational provision proposed by the European Parliament and retained by the Commission (namely putting the location of the dumping sites on web-sites) has obvious drawbacks. Other amendments include the financial framework: in accordance with the terms of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999, paragraph 2.(c) mentions a financial framework of EUR 7 million for the period 2000-2006, equivalent to the EUR 1 million per year proposed by the Commission. Furthermore, the common position establishes a management committee instead of the advisory committee proposed by the Commission. The relevant decision-making procedure has been brought into line with Article 4 of the Council Decision 1999/468/EC on committee procedures, and the period allowed for the Council to act has been set to three months.