Environment: public participation in plans and programmes

2000/0331(COD) - 10/12/2002

The Conciliation Committee marked formal agreement on this dossier following the compromise reached after trialogue meetings in November 2002. The main points of the compromise package are as follows: - in future the requirements concerning public participation in line with the Arhus Convention are to be included in relevant Community legislation from the outset; - authorities are encouraged to inform the public about decisions taken and the reasons and considerations upon which the decisions are based, and public participation processes, and to promote environmental education of the public; - in a statement to be annexed to the directive, the Commission undertakes to submit in the first quarter of 2003 a proposal for a directive concerning implementation of the Arhus Convention as regards access to justice in environmental matters; - the time limits for participation in decision-making at the various stages must be reasonable so that the public can prepare and participate in decision-making effectively within the limits set by the directive; - public participation is compulsory in cases where the updating of the operating permits of installations and factories is of greatest significance (if emissions exceed stated limits); - in accordance with the Arhus Convention, projects relating to national defence may be excluded from the scope of the directive only on the basis of case-by-case decisions by the Member States· authorities; - the public's right of access to information about the reasons for granting or refusing a permit is increased and the authorities are required to provide the public with practical information about access to administrative and judicial review procedures; - after the Commission has submitted a report, accompanied by any proposals for amendments which it considers appropriate in the light of the implementation and effectiveness of the directive during the first six years of its application, the field covered by the directive is to be reviewed.