

Pollution, public health: quality of bathing water (repeal. Directive 76/160/EEC)

2002/0254(COD) - 04/03/2003

The Council held a policy debate, on the basis of a paper drawn by the Presidency, concerning a proposal for a Directive on the quality of bathing water. Ministers were asked to address the following questions during the debate : - whether or not, and taking into account the experience gained with the implementation of Directive 160/76/EEC, the proposed approach and level of protection would lead to improved health protection among bathers; - coverage of specific difficulties experienced in the past with regard to bathing water quality (whether or not compliance will be facilitated) ; - "other recreational activities" (e.g. windsurfing, kayaking, jet-skiing) in the context of classification of bathing water and of bathing water profiles (whether or not these should be maintained in the scope of the proposal). Delegations welcomed the Commission's proposal and stressed the importance of protecting bathers' health and providing national authorities with improved and flexible management facilities and quality assessment guidelines. Many delegations considered the proposed microbiological parameters and monitoring frequencies to be appropriate. A number of delegations underscored the importance of having to be taken into account. A few delegations asked for the further examination to be made of the implementation costs raised by some aspects of the proposal. A majority of delegations considered that "other recreational activities" should be outside the scope of the proposal. Lastly, the President welcomed Member States' contributions to the debate and concluded by stating the need for further examination at working group level on issues, such as: clear information to the public, provisions for emergency plans, handling of long-term pollution and the question of other recreational activities.