

Forests: protection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution and fires, action 2003-2008

Forest Focus

2002/0164(COD) - 13/06/2003 - Council position

The common position is substantially in accordance with the positions taken by the Commission and the Parliament, insofar as it: - confirms all the objectives and essential elements of the Commission's proposal which were also supported by the European Parliament. However, the Commission cannot support the changes the Council and the Parliament made on comitology and on the inclusion of forest fire prevention measures and the corresponding budget increase; - takes the greatest possible account of the opinion of the European Parliament by taking on, in letter or in spirit, a great number of its amendments. The Council took note of the abstentions of the Italian, Portuguese and Spanish delegations. The common position responds to the concerns expressed by some Member States by introducing changes to the Commission's amended proposal with respect to the inclusion of forest fire prevention measures, the corresponding budget increase, as well as regards the comitology procedure. The EP at first reading adopted 46 amendments to the proposal. The common position incorporates (totally, in part or in principle, by means of identical or similar wording, or in spirit) 29 amendments. Out of the 45 amendment made by the European Parliament at first reading, 30 of these have been incorporated in the common position, fully, in part, or in principle. The remaining 15 amendments were not incorporated for reasons of - depending on the case - legal coherence and legislative technique, clarity in technical terminology, practical feasibility. The amendments that have been incorporated concern: - the addition of a reference to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change; - the future scheme, it has to be in line with international commitments; - the subsidiarity issue and "forest ecosystems" has been replaced by "forests" to ensure consistency with the new definitions; - a more general reference to national, European and international monitoring mechanisms; The following amendments have not been incorporated: - those relating to the forest fire prevention measures. In Article 5(2) of the common position specific forest fire prevention measures (awareness-raising campaigns and special training) have been included in order to allow Member States which have not yet done so to include them in the rural development programmes by 31 December 2005; - the amendment relating to the budget. The Council has decided to include the forest fire prevention measures on a temporary basis only with an additional budget of 0.5 million euro per year; - other amendments were not incorporated in particular, because they go beyond the scope of the proposal or because they develop unnecessary administrative details.