Quality of water intended for human consumption. Drinking Water Directive

1995/0010(SYN) - 21/12/1995 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Economic and Social Committee broadly endorsed the Commission proposal to amend the Drinking Water Directive and confirmed that the Directive was primarily a health policy measure. It particularly welcomed the dropping of the incorrect and obsolete parameters, the abolition of indicative values and the adoption of rules to deal with situations where values are exceeded. A ‘horizontal’ comparison of different EU water policy measures, however, revealed that in some areas Community legislation had clearly not been harmonised. The ESC hoped that the communication and new framework directive on water policy recently announced by the Commission would effectively resolve the present lack of coherence. The ESC was pleased that the Commission had largely followed the recent recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO). For levels of plant protection products, however, the Commission had kept to the previous overall limit value of 0.1 microgram/litre of drinking water. This limit value could only be justified by the fact that it was a precautionary measure. The ESC broadly supported the Commission’s efforts to increase transparency in the application of the directive. The measures to protect and improve drinking water that were associated with the proposed Directive would involve considerable additional costs. The ESC called for aid programmes in the Member States to make the costs of replacing lead pipes bearable and reasonable for low-income households.