

# Framework for Community action in the field of water policy. Water Framework Directive

1997/0067(COD) - 05/06/2000 - Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading

The Commission accepted fully, in part or in principle, 47 of the 61 amendments adopted by the Parliament. Those rejected include: - the statement that water is a common heritage rather than a commercial product. The proposal does not treat water as a commercial product but protects water as an environmental and social good. - the statement that there is no natural right to discharge hazardous substances into water. The function of this amendment is unclear and the proposal does not make reference to any "rights" of polluting. - the definition of "hazardous substances" is not accepted. The proposal defines clear criteria for selection of "hazardous substances" and the definition is therefore unnecessary. Moreover, the proposed definition deviates in important detail from the generally recognised definitions of hazardous substances. The amendments accepted in part include that amendment requesting proposals for continuous reduction of discharge, emissions and losses one year after the adoption of the priority list. Reference to the aim of levels close to zero by December 2020 is accepted in redrafted wording which reflects the essentially aspirational and political nature of this amendment. The amendment requesting shortening of the timetable for implementation from 16 years to 10 is considered too strict. The Commission does agree that shortening is needed and suggests a global solution with a certain shortening of the deadline in combination with stricter conditions for achieving the environmental objectives. With the deletion of a six-year extension period, in combination with a no-deterioration clause, more stringent criteria for extensions, for less stringent environmental objectives and for compliance as requested by Parliament the Commission accepts the 16 years of the common position as an overall date for achieving the environmental objectives. Appropriate amendments have been made to this effect.