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

1997/0067(COD) - 22/10/1999 - Council position

The common position reached by the Council essentially aims at preventing deterioration of ecological status and pollution and restoring all bodies of surface water and groundwater with the aim of achieving good status at the latest 16 years after the entry into force of the Directive. taking the identification of river basin districts as a basis, Member States are to provide management plans (containing inter alia the river basin's characteristics, monitoring of the water status and coordinated programmes of measures) which are subject to public consultation and aim to achieve good water status through a phased implementation of the measures they envisage. The common position takes into account the interaction between surface water and groundwater, the impact of human activity, e.g. industry, agriculture, energy production and transport, the quality and quantity aspects and contributes to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts, to providing a sufficient supply of good quality water for users, to protecting territorial and marine waters, to achieving the objectives of relevant international agreements (e.g. aiming at the prevention and elimination of pollution) and to progressively reducing the emissions of hazardous substances. The common position is very close in overall structure and approach of the Commission's initial proposal, and retains the majority of its provisions. Very few new elements are introduced in the text which incorporates either in their totality or in part, the 77 amendments put forward by the European Parliament. A new article specifies the requirements for application of the combined approach for control of point and diffuse sources. A number of definitions were reformulated in order to clarify their scope of application and their content. The former Annex II has been considerably improved and expanded in terms of technical and scientific detail, taking over also information requirements for analysis of human activity from the former Annex III. A new Annex III takes over the technical specification for the economic analysis from the former Annex III. The former Annex III has, consequently been deleted. The technical specifications of Annex III is considerably simpler than the Commission proposed but this simplification is complemented by the possibility for adaptation to technical progress through Committee procedure.