

2004 enlargement, environment: packaging and packaging waste

2004/0045(COD) - 24/02/2004 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to offer the acceding Member States an extended deadline to achieve the targets set in the revision of Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste. **LEGISLATIVE ACT :** European Parliament and Council Directive **CONTENT:** in December 2001 the European Commission submitted a proposal to revise the 1994 Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive. The revision proposes setting increased recovery and recycling targets which are to be achieved by 31/12/08. At the time of the proposal's submission, however, the acceding Member States had no say or input over the setting of these targets and no specific proposals for the acceding States were included in the original proposal. Accordingly, and following the signing of the Accession Treaties in 2003 eight of the acceding Member States requested further consultation on the proposal to revise the packaging and packaging waste Directive with the result that all of the acceding States, bar Cyprus, requested further transitional periods. The European Commission accepted the request and held bi-lateral technical consultations with the acceding States. As a result of these consultations the Commission accepted that the applicant countries should benefit from a later deadline to implement the targets of the revised packaging Directive. Consideration to do so is based on the fact that they have only recently started to build up their packaging recycling and recovery systems. Achieving the same targets set for the existing Member States with their earlier implementation deadline would cause undue costs. Rather than seeking to amend the existing proposal, the European Commission decided the most sensible way to offer new deadlines for the acceding States would be to submit an amending proposal under article 95 of the Treaty. The Commission hopes that by submitting the proposal now it will allow a first debate in the European Parliament and the Council during the first half of 2004. Such a timing will allow future decisions to be taken once the acceding States have joined the European Union and are therefore in a position to exercise their voting rights. Essentially, this proposal is limited to setting a deadline of 31 December 2012 for acceding States. Such a move offers acceding States greater time to implement the recovery and recycling targets. The proposed deadline is viewed as a favourable compromise between allowing acceding States greater time to adapt to the requirements of the Directive and not giving them too much leniency. The deadline proposed also takes into the account those agreed for Greece, Ireland and Portugal.