

European Environment Agency, European information and observation (amend. Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90)

1997/0168(SYN) - 20/01/1999

The Committee adopted unanimously a recommendation on the Council's common position on a proposal for changes to the Copenhagen-based European Environment Agency (EEA), which officially opened in August 1995. Mr Collins believes that the common position is generally consistent with the original Commission proposal and the stance taken by Parliament at first reading last February. In particular, he is pleased that Council has taken on board six of the nine amendments adopted by Parliament on that occasion. However, his recommendation also incorporates nine amendments - all adopted by the committee - which seek either to reinstate key passages dropped by Council or to amend new text added by Council. The current amendments call for greater use by the Commission of information garnered by the EEA, which must be capable of being used to implement and evaluate the Community's environmental policy and to ensure compliance with it. Information may be required of the EEA not only by the Commission and Member States but also by other EU institutions (eg the European Parliament). Parliament should also have a representative on the EEA's bureau. In addition, members want the EEA to submit a performance report to Parliament as well as to the Commission. The EEA should also be able to provide information on its own initiative. The committee is also keen that an information reference centre to be developed by the EEA should include a data register. There should be freedom of access to validated environmental information and information disseminated to the public should be reliable and comparable.