

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

1997/0067(COD) - 25/01/2000

The committee adopted the draft recommendation for second reading (codecision procedure) by Marie-Noëlle LIENEMANN (PES, F) amending the Council's common position with a view to making the Water Framework Directive more ambitious. The amendments introduced changes in a number of areas. Firstly, whereas the Council sought to achieve the target of good surface water status 16 years at the latest after the directive came into force, the committee wished to reduce this to 10 years. It also called for an end to discharges and losses of hazardous substances by 2020, the aim being to reach "levels close to zero by 2020". The Council also hoped to achieve good groundwater status after 16 years, but the committee wanted to halt the deterioration in the chemical and quantitative status of groundwater and achieve good groundwater status within 10 years. It also proposed that any standards and objectives relating to Protected Areas should be achieved within 10 and not 16 years. On the question of derogations, the Council had provided for the deadline for achieving the objective to be extended by up to three updates of the River Basin Management Plan, one update representing six years. The committee sought to limit any extension to two updates of the River Management Plan and called for stricter handling of such derogations. Another amendment adopted by the committee added radioactive substances to the list of pollutants. On the question of charging, the committee set the date of 2010 as a deadline by which Member States should ensure that water-pricing policies provided adequate incentives for users to use water resources efficiently. It also wanted to include a clear statement that the Commission would bring forward a proposal by 2012 to ensure that environmental and resource costs were reflected in the price of water use. Exemptions would be granted to allow a basic level of water use for domestic purposes at an affordable price. On the question of water transfers, the committee suggested that, in cases where an adequate water supply of wholesome drinking water could not be secured, the competent local authority would be empowered to reallocate water from uses in other water-use sectors. Lastly, in its common position, the Council had provided for detailed monitoring programs and a complete system of rating the ecological state but did not lay down measures to be taken where certain levels of pollutants are exceeded. The committee was more specific on this point, recommending various measures including a management plan to be implemented if nitrate concentrations exceed 25 mg/l in groundwater.