Management of waste from extractive industries. Mining Waste Directive

2003/0107(COD) - 16/03/2004

The committee adopted the report by Jonas SJÖSTEDT (GUE/NGL, S) amending the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure. Many of the amendments reflected the committee's concerns about the problem of 'historical' waste. One amendment stipulated that, once a facility has been closed, the operator must not be considered free of his obligations in respect of maintenance, surveillance and monitoring in the stage subsequent to the closure of a waste treatment plant over the entire time-period required by the competent authority. MEPs also said that the Member States should be obliged to make an inventory of all closed sites (e.g. tailings ponds) within three years to tackle the problem of chronic water pollution which was particularly acute in Central and Eastern Europe. The inventory, which should be made available to the public, should contain information such as the geographical location of the site, the types of waste present and the environmental conditions of the site, i.e. quality of soil and surface water, river sub-basins and groundwater. The sites listed in the inventory should be classified according to the degree of their impact on human health and the environment. MEPs added that rehabilitation of the most polluted sites should be started within four years of the directive's entry into force and that the costs should be borne by the waste producer "insofar as the latter is known and available". Where the waste producer is unknown or unavailable, national or Community rules on liability should apply. The committee also tabled an amendment aimed at ensuring that safe disposal of the waste is one of the objectives of the management plan, which must be considered even at the design stage. When planning for closure, the need for monitoring and management in the future should influence the choice of design.