

# Environment: assessment of effects of certain plans and programmes

1996/0304(COD) - 04/12/1996 - Legislative proposal

**OBJECTIVE:** This proposal for a Council directive aims to provide for a high level of protection of the environment by ensuring that an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes in the context of town and country planning and that the results of this assessment are taken into account during the preparation and adoption of such plans and programmes. This approach complements the environmental impact assessment of projects provided for in Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. **SUBSTANCE:** The proposal applies only to formal plans and programmes, ie. those subject to adoption by a competent authority or prepared for adoption by a legislative act, for the purpose of establishing the framework for subsequent development consents. It covers town and country planning plans and programmes in sectors such as transport, waste management, water resource management, industry, telecommunications, tourism and energy. The proposal provides for an environmental assessment to be carried out before the adoption of a plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure by the competent authority of a plan or programme. It provides for the possibility of exemption in respect of: a) minor modifications of existing plans and programmes without significant environmental effects; b) plans and programmes which determine the particular use of small areas. The proposal describes the information which should be provided when an assessment is required. The competent authority must evaluate the scope of the information which must be included in the environmental statement. In this connection it must consult the environmental authorities and/or bodies concerned. It is provided that the environmental authorities and/or bodies concerned and the public concerned shall be given an opportunity to express their opinion on the information provided and on the draft plan or programme. They must also be informed of the adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure. The proposal requires the competent authority to take into consideration the result of the assessment process before the adoption of a plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure though the final decision remains the responsibility of the decision-making body. Provision is also made for an exchange of information on the application of the directive between the Member States and the Commission.