

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

1997/0067(COD) - 26/02/1997 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: The proposal for a directive aims to achieve three objectives no later than 2010: good surface water status in all surface water; good groundwater status in all groundwaters; compliance with all standards and objectives relating to the Protected Areas, including water used for the abstraction of drinking water. **SUBSTANCE:** The proposal responds to a request from the Council and from the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection, which in June 1995 called for a fundamental review of Community water policy. It establishes a Community framework for the protection of surface water and groundwater in the Community within a common approach and with common objectives, principles and common basic measures. The proposal for a framework directive establishes the overall objective of achieving good water status and it requires: - river basin management; - an assessment of the characteristics of the river basin; - monitoring of the status of the surface water and groundwater of the river basin; - the establishment of programmes of measures to achieve the objective; - the summarizing of all the above in a 'River Basin Management Plan'; and - public consultation on that plan. In addition, it contains requirements for: - a mechanism to ensure that water use is paid for at full cost recovery prices; - the collection of various bodies of data on the status of the aquatic environment and the constraints to which it is subjected; - a feedback mechanism to inform national authorities and the Commission of particular problems; - action to combat accidental pollution; - simplified reporting procedures; and - a procedure for the development of coordinated strategies for dealing with pollution by individual pollutants or groups of pollutants; - the establishment of a network for the exchange of information and experience between water professionals throughout the Community. The timetable envisaged for the implementation of the directive is as follows: - end of 1997: Council adopts directive; - end of 1999: Member States transpose directive; - Dec. 2000 Waters used for the abstraction of drinking water designated; - Dec. 2001 (a) Analyses of the characteristics of River Basin Districts completed; (b) reviews of the environmental impact of human activity completed; (c) economic analysis of water use completed; (d) Registers of Protected Areas completed; (e) monitoring programmes operational; - Dec. 2004 River Basin Management Plans published covering 2005-2010 (these plans will be revised every 6 years); - Dec. 2006 Commission publishes first report on implementation; - Dec. 2007: Programmes of measures fully operational; - Dec. 2010 Deadline for objective of meeting 'good status' and for the objective of charging for all uses of water (abstraction, distribution, consumption, collection, treatment etc.) to ensure full recuperation of costs; - Dec. 2013: Commission reviews directive.