Protection of the marine environment, Convention for the North-East Atlantic OSPAR: ecosystems, biological diversity

1999/0095(CNS) - 26/04/1999 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: approval on behalf of the Community of the new Annex to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR). CONTENT: Since 1997, the Community has been party to the OSPAR Convention and is represented by the European Commission as regards matters of Community competence. On 22-23 July 1998, the first Ministerial meeting of the OSPAR Commission since the Convention entered into force was held in Sintra, Portugal. During this meeting, the Contracting Parties, meeting within the OSPAR adopted a number of decisions, one of which was to add a new Annex V on the protection and conservation of the ecosystems and biological diversity of the maritime area. This new Annex stipulates that the Contracting Parties shall take the necessary measures to protect and conserve the ecosystems and biological diversity of the maritime area, and to restore, where practicable, marine areas which have been adversely affected. To this end, the Contracting Parties must cooperate in adopting programmes and measures for the control of human activities by applying the criteria in Appendix 3 (these criteria are the extent, the intensity and the duration of the human activity; the actual and potential adverse effects on specific species, communities, habitats, ecological processes; the irreversibility or durability of these effects). The Commission feels that the objectives stated in the new Annex V as regards the protection and conservation of the ecosystems are consistent with and complement the Community's objectives in this field. Furthermore, the Commission feels that Community approval and participation in the implementation of this new Annex will help to achieve the objectives defined in Article 130r of the Treaty (preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment).