Protection of the marine environment, Convention for the North-East Atlantic OSPAR: disused offshore installations

1999/0097(CNS) - 26/04/1999 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: approval on behalf of the Community of OSPAR Decision 98/3 on the disposal of disused off-shore installations. CONTENT: Since 1997, the Community has been party to the Convention for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention) and is represented within the decision-making organ of the Convention, the Ospar Commission, 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 that meeting, a large number of changes were made to the Convention and several important decisions were taken. One of these decisions concerned the disposal of dis-used off-shore installations which establishes the general principle of a prohibition on the dumping and the leaving in place, wholly or partly, of disused offshore installations within the maritime area covered by the OSPAR Convention. During the negotiation of OSPAR Decision 98/3, the Commission made sure that the Community's interest was fully taken into account, this being the prevention of direct and indirect pollution of the sea by hazardous and low-level radioactive substances, the disposal of waste, the protection of species and habitats, fisheries and safeguarding other uses of the sea and sea beds. The Community's action within the OSPAR Convention is therefore fully within the framework defined in Art. 130r of the Treaty, particularly as regards the pursuit of the objectives of preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment and promoting measures at international level to deal with regional environmental problems. OSPAR Decion 98/3 meets the aims and the principles set out by the Commission in its communication on the removal and disposal of disused offshore oil and gas installations and those defined by the Council in its Conclusions of 11 June 1998. The OSPAR Commission will consider the preparation of amendments at its 2003 meeting.