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

1997/0067(COD) - 17/06/1999 - Modified legislative proposal

The Commission's amended proposal accepts, in total or partially, 88 amendments out of the 133 adopted by the European Parliament in its first reading. The Commission has, therefore, accepted amendments aiming to; - clearly indicate that the prevention and the deterioration of the state of water is an objective in itself; - add a protection reference and to improve humid zones; - improve transparency and public participation. Moreover, the Commission accepts the amendments making explicit reference to the inclusion of substances affecting endocrinal functions and radioactive substances in the Directive. Because the measures concerning dangerous substances were an essential problem, the Commission welcomed amendments that called for Community action with a view to continued reduction of the discharge of dangerous substances moving in the direction of their elimination, in conformity with the Esbjerg declaration on the occasion of the 4th Conference of the North Sea. The Commission has also inserted in its amended proposal the objective of achieving some concentrations in the marine environment which are close to natural values for the substances normally present in the marine milieu, and close to zero for artificial substances of human origin. The objective of an insignificant level of anthropogenic pollution in underground waters had been added as an ultimate objective. Therefore, the Commission has preferred to insert this objective as a supplementary objective to a good state of water, without specifying a date. The basic idea of the proposed amendment is to fix prices at a level that encourages the achievement of environmental objectives had been taken into account in the proposed Directive. The Commission has also accepted the amendments attempting to specify certain conditions for derogations, in particular, natural disasters, previous human activities or natural conditions. Moreover, the Commission has adopted the amendment adding a derogation, under certain conditions, for discharges into underground water resulting from exploration operations and oil extraction, as well as other extractive industries, the storage of gas and in the framework of certain scientific and related work. The Commission accepted in part the amendment clarifying the application of quality standards for surface water destined for water supplies. Lastly, the Commission accepts in principle a certain number of amendments concerning the combined approach and programmes of measures.