

Environment: assessment of effects of certain plans and programmes

1996/0304(COD) - 07/04/2000 - Commission communication on Council's position

The Commission accepted fully, in principle or in part fifteen of the twenty-nine amendments proposed by the EP in the First Reading (whilst voting, the 33 original amendments were merged to finally 29). They were incorporated in the amended Proposal. All of these amendments of the EP have been incorporated into the common position fully, in principle or in part. The scope of application of the future Directive formed the key issue of the negotiations. In its amended proposal, the Commission, responding also to a request of the EP, went for a rather broad scope for which an environmental assessment was mandatory for all plans and programmes in unlimited planning or programming areas or sectors when fulfilling certain conditions. Only as regards minor modifications and certain plans or programmes at local level Member states were given the possibility of determining themselves whether an environmental assessment was necessary or not. The result achieved in the Common Position is quite different. The Common Position clearly splits the scope of application into mandatory and non-mandatory parts, resulting in a limitation of the plans and programmes covered in comparison to the amended Commission proposal. Additionally, the definition of plans and programmes is more limited because further formal requirements were added and several exemptions for certain types of plans and programmes have been inserted into the Common Position which reduce the scope of application. In conclusion and in general, the changes introduced by the Council clarify and improve the text of the proposed Directive. As regards the scope of application of the future Directive, however, the Commission is of the opinion that it is too limited in comparison to the approach pursued in the Commission Proposal.