Trans-European hydraulic networks: technological feasibility

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In adopting the report by Mr Juan de Dios IZQUIERDO COLLADO (PSE, E) on trans-European hydraulic networks, the European Parliament called on the Council and Commission to encourage the interconnection of adjoining water basins within the territory of different Member States wherever resource management could be carried out more efficiently on a joint basis. In view of the uneven distribution of natural renewable water resources within the Union, Parliament suggested establishing trans-European hydrological networks involving large-scale transfers of water between catchment areas. It called on the Commission, in particular, to draw up a framework proposal setting out guidelines for the completion of the interconnection of the water basins in the EU, with a view to regulating water levels in crises, and to adopt optimization and administration criteria for water, in connection with the implementation of trans-European environmental infrastructure networks. It called on the regional and local authorities in the EU responsible for water management to draw up their resource management plans in a transparent fashion, to facilitate their integration into a future trans-European hydrological plan. It called on the Commission, furthermore, to: - examine possibilities of desalination of sea water, - assess, inter alia, water needs which could be met by means of trans-European networks and the local impact of the establishment of such networks (physical impact on the countryside and ecosystems and on human activity, review of water needs for industrial use, irrigation and drinking water consumption, etc), - establish standardized methods for measuring, monitoring and forecasting resources. It called for a European pilot scheme to be launched to test the technical and economic feasibility of linking up the Rhone basin, as a classical example of a trans-European waterway network, with the isolated hydrological network of the Iberian peninsula, given that this would permit improved use of transnational storage capacities. It called on the Commission to examine the possibility of creating a market in water and to encourage Member States to adopt more balanced water management policies, moving towards charging prices for the supply of water which reflected real costs. There was also a need to study the strategic importance of water resources in the Union's relations with third countries and to examine the prospects for developing trans-European hydraulic networks by way of international treaties.