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

1997/0067(COD) - 16/02/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

In approving the Council's common position, MEPs voted in favour of Mrs. Marie-Noëlle Lienemann's (PES, Fr) report which contains a number of amendments to the common position. The amended recitals draw attention to a number of concerns including : - water is not a commercial product like any other but, rather, a heritage which must be protected, defended and treated as such; - good water quality will secure the drinking water supply for the population; - environmental objectives should be set to ensure that good status of surface water and groundwater is achieved throughout the Community and that deterioration in the status of waters is avoided at EU level; - the ultimate aim is to achieve complete elimination of all anthropogenic pollutants and background concentrations of naturally occurring substances; - there is no natural right to discharge hazardous or radioactive substances into water; scientific and technical progress allows the application of progressively less polluting production technologies; - coastal fisheries, despite being located outside river basins, should be recognised as being one of the economic activities most affected by all forms of environmental deterioration within such basins. The Parliament sets a number of target dates to achieve particular objectives. It wants to see the goal of good 'surface water' achieved within 10 years of the Directive coming into force rather than 16 and a similar date for good 'groundwater'. Parliament voted to include 'radioactive substances' in the list of pollutants and also voted for levels close to 'zero discharge' by 2020 and for water-pricing policies to come into effect by 2010. However, another amendment provides for exemptions 'in order to allow a basic level of water use for domestic purposes at a more affordable price', while a further amendment allows for pricing policy 'to take account of the specific geographical and climatic characteristics of the various regions'.