

European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register

2004/0231(COD) - 07/10/2004 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to establish a European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register.

PROPOSED ACT : Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT : the European Commission is presenting this proposal in a bid to enhance public access to environmental information through the establishment of a coherent, integrated, European-wide "Pollutant Release and Transfer Register" (PRTR). Such a tool should help contribute to preventing and reducing overall pollution as well as offering useful data to environmental decision makers, when formulating environmental policy. The proposal is being presented to the Council and European Parliament within the context of the UN-ECE Protocol on PRTR, which was agreed upon in Kiev, May 2003. The Commission has based much of the present proposal on the UN-ECE PRTR thus allowing for a coherent, integrated European PRTR, which has the further advantage of being fully in line with the UN agreed register.

Once agreed upon, the European PRTR would fully succeed the existing "European Pollutant Emission Register" or EPER (based on Commission Decision 2000/479/EC) and the "Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control" instrument or IPPC (based on Council Directive 96/61/EC).

The Commission notes that the existing EPER already implements many key elements of the UN Protocol, such as harmonised reporting rules, public accessibility by electronic means, broad coverage of sources and polluting substances. Upgrading the EPER into a European PRTR will not entail any conceptual change. New aspects introduced through the PRTR will include facilitating measures such as what substances need to be reported on, coverage of land release, coverage of off-site waste transfers, coverage of releases from diffuse sources, public participation and lastly, periodic reporting requirements.

Where it does differ from the UN register is in cases where the UN tool has to be made compatible with existing and related EU legislation. For example, in the field of water and the Water Framework Directive the list of substances of the UN-ECE PRTR Protocol is extended by three substances. Further, the reporting timeframe of the UN-ECE Protocol is shortened in the Proposal. The first reporting year will be 2007, with data collected from the first European PRTR to be published on the internet in October 2009.