Protection of groundwater: prevention and control of pollution

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The committee adopted the report by Christa KLASS (EPP-ED , DE) amending the proposed directive under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure:
- the title should make it clear that the proposal deals with specifically chemical pollution and also deterioration of groundwater;
- when monitoring groundwater quality, Member States should assess the effects which any significant reduction in aquifers' water reserves will have on the environment and on sustainable development. They should also focus their efforts on reversing other trends which could have environmentally significant consequences;
- the groundwater quality standards applicable to the good chemical status of groundwater should be based on the human and eco-toxicological criteria underpinning the definition of pollution in the 2000 Water Framework Directive (WFD);
- the provisions on classification of groundwater chemical status on the basis of measurements should be clarified, to ensure that one poor measurement point does not result in the whole body of groundwater being classified as poor. In the event of the quality standard being exceeded at a monitoring point, Member States should carry out tests to ascertain whether the findings obtained also apply to the entire body of groundwater. They should also check whether drinking water supplies are being protected in accordance with Article 7 of the WFD;
- a threshold value should be set for the sum of pesticides and related substances, as often pollution cannot be traced back to one pesticide;
- MEPs introduced a revision clause to ensure that the list of pollutants and quality standards is reviewed at regular intervals and that Parliament is involved in the legislation through codecision;
- under the precautionary principle, prevention must remain a key element in the monitoring of groundwater in the EU. The new directive should therefore incorporate the key provisions of Directive 80 /68/EEC (due to be repealed in 2013) on prevention, avoidance or control of the input of dangerous substances;
- Member States must pass on the costs of groundwater pollution to the polluter, as laid down by the WFD;

- MEPs simplified the Commission's proposed common procedure for deriving threshold values: Member States would be required to focus on what is important to the particular groundwater body, the risks posed by pollutants and how the threshold value is measured.