

Framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy. Marine Strategy Framework Directive

2005/0211(COD) - 10/10/2006

The committee adopted the report by Marie-Noëlle LIENEMANN (PES, FR) amending - under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure - the proposed directive establishing a Framework for Community Action in the field of Marine Environmental Policy (Marine Strategy Directive):

- Article 1 was amended to make it clear that Member States will be obliged to achieve good environmental status. This target was also brought forward from 2021, as proposed by the Commission, to 2017;
- Article 2 was amended so as to specify that the directive "shall take account of the need to ensure the quality of the marine environment of associated and applicant States". In this connection, another amendment included the Black Sea among the regions to be covered by the directive, in view of the imminent accession of Romania and Bulgaria;
- a new Article 2b introduced a number of definitions, including that of 'good environmental status';
- new provisions were inserted requiring Member States to introduce appropriate mechanisms for developing a single, coordinated Marine Strategy and drafting a joint report per Marine Region;
- a new Article 4b provided for the creation of marine protected areas (MPAs) which would contribute to "a coherent and representative network by 2012 at the latest";
- the Member States and the Commission should promote international cooperation with third countries and international or regional organisations with a view to their adopting marine strategies to cover regions or sub-regions with European marine waters;
- by 2007, the Commission should establish a regulatory framework, focusing on environmental criteria, ensuring that all stakeholders are consulted prior to major infrastructure projects in the marine environment;
- a new Article 10b stipulated that Member States should adopt measures and programmes for the traceability and detectability of marine pollution;
- provision was made for a number of exceptions to the requirement to achieve the environmental targets and good environmental status, e.g. where the power to adopt the measures in question does not lie exclusively with the Member State, by virtue of Community or international law, or where the deterioration of the environment is due to pressures either totally or partially beyond its control (i.e. climate change);
- 2 years after the directive's entry into force, the Commission should report on "the state of the marine environment of Arctic waters of importance for the Community" and propose measures aimed at establishing the Arctic as a protected area, similar to the Antarctic, and designated as "a natural reserve devoted to peace and science";

- lastly, the committee felt that the time frames proposed by the Commission were too long, given the urgency of the situation, and therefore proposed that the various stages in the process be shortened: the initial assessment and the determination of good environmental status should take two years instead of four; the introduction of environmental targets and the implementation of the monitoring programmes should take three years instead of six; the development of the programme of measures should be scheduled for 2012 instead of 2016; and the programme should be brought into operation in 2014 instead of 2018. The directive should be reviewed after 10 years, rather than 15 as originally proposed.