Assessment and management of flood risks

2006/0005(COD) - 04/05/2006

The committee adopted the report by Richard SEEBER (EPP-ED, AT) broadly approving the proposed directive on the assessment and management of floods, subject to a number of amendments under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure:

- to reflect the fact that this piece of legislation is essentially concerned with risks, rather than with actual flood events, the title should read “Proposal for a directive….. on the assessment and management of flood risks”, and this wording should also appear in Article 1 setting out the aims of the directive;

- emphasis should be placed on the principles of solidarity and cooperation among neighbouring countries, including non-EU countries, so that flood risk management can be coordinated over the entire area of a cross-border river catchment basin. Networks should be developed for the exchange of information between the competent authorities, and flood risk management plans should take account of the impact of these plans on neighbouring countries;

- the subsidiarity principle should also be given due importance, and “considerable flexibility should be left to the local and regional level”. For example, Member States should be able to lay down specific measures for areas with special characteristics. They should also be allowed some discretion as to what investigation period or what likely return period they wish to use as the basis for their flooding maps;

- there should be a broader definition of the concept of “flood”, so as to include heavy rainfall as another cause of this phenomenon;

- in order to reduce the administrative and technical burden of implementing the directive, it should be possible for Member States to make use of existing work carried out in the area of flood protection, i.e. existing preliminary flood risk assessments as well as flood risk maps and management plans;

- flood risk management plans should include measures to prevent accidental pollution from technical installations with potential risk as classified in the “Seveso II” directive;

- flood risk maps may divide areas into zones according to land use and vulnerability to any likely damage;

- Member States should inform and actively involve the public “to ensure a high level of preparedness as part of the flood risk management plans”;

- when drawing up its assessment report by the end of 2018, the Commission should take account of the impact of climate change.