Assessment and management of flood risks

2006/0005(COD) - 13/06/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Richard **SEEBER** (EPP-ED, AT) making several amendments to the Commission's proposal:

- 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. River basin flood management should aim to create a common responsibility and solidarity within the basin. To that end Member States should endeavour to raise awareness and encourage cooperation among all stakeholders as well as in areas that are not, or are less, prone to flooding but which can contribute by their land use and practices to downstream or upstream floods.

- the subsidiarity principle should also be given due importance, and considerable flexibility should be left to the local and regional level in particular as regards organisation and responsibility of authorities, flood management plans and risk maps, the level of protection and the measures and the timetables to achieve the objectives set. 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;

- Member States may decide, in respect of river basins, sub-basins and stretches of coastline for which a sufficient potential risk may already be assumed, to dispense with the preliminary flood risk assessment if certain conditions are met;

- flood risk management measures, especially those related to building infrastructures, should be subject to a sound and transparent economic and environmental appraisal to ensure their long-term viability for citizens and businesses, taking into account the principle of cost-recovery, including environmental and resource costs;

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

- Member States shall determine the specific points at which the flood risk is higher. That information must be taken into account in land use planning;

- Member States' flood risk management plans at the level of the river basin district must describe flooding processes and their sensitivity to change, including the role of flood plain areas as a natural

retention/buffer of floods and flood conveyance routes at present or in the future. Plans must also describe development plans that would entail a change of land use or of allocation of the population and distribution of economic activities resulting in an increase of flood risks in the area itself or in upstream or downstream regions;

- the flood risk management plan will include measures to prevent accidental pollution from technical installations as referred to in Annex I of Directive 96/61/EC and covered by Directive 96/82/EC as a consequence of flooding;

- Member States should inform and actively involve the public “to ensure a high level of preparedness as part of the flood risk management plans”. Member States will provide the inhabitants of risk areas with information and training on a regular basis, so as to enable them to take appropriate pre-flood precautions and post-flood action;

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