

Protection of groundwater: prevention and control of pollution

2003/0210(COD) - 12/12/2006 - Final act

PURPOSE: to protect groundwater from pollution and deterioration.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Directive 2006/118/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration.

BACKGROUND: groundwater forms the largest body of freshwater in the European Union and is a major source of public drinking water. To that end the Community, in 2000, adopted Directive 2000/60/EC *on the general provisions for the protection and conservation of groundwater*. For a summary see COD/1997/0067. Article 17 of that Directive provides for the adoption of specific measures to prevent and control ground water pollution.

CONTENT: the purpose of this Directive, therefore, is to establish specific measures to prevent and control ground water pollution. It intends to do so by:

- setting the criteria for the assessment of good groundwater chemical status;
- setting the criteria for the identification and reversal of significant and sustained upward trend;
- defining a starting point for “trend reversals”.

The Directive complements the provisions set out in Directive 2000/60/EC and seeks to prevent the deterioration of all groundwater. The technical specifications are set out in four Annexes attached to the Regulation, to which the Member States must refer when assessing the state of their groundwater reserves. The Annexes deal with:

Annex I: Groundwater quality standards.

Annex II: Threshold values for groundwater pollutants and indicators of pollution.

Annex III: Assessment of groundwater chemical status.

Annex IV: Identification and reversal of significant and sustained upward trends.

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