Basic information

1998/2044(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Marine pollution: disused offshore oil and gas installations, removal **Subject** 3.60.02 Oil industry, motor fuels 3.70.05 Marine and coastal pollution, pollution from ships, oil pollution	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	GROSSETÊTE Françoise (PPE)	21/06/1998

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	HUDGHTON Ian (ARE)	11/01/1999

Council of the European Union

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
18/02/1998	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1998)0049	Summary
19/06/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/04/1999	Vote in committee		Summary
20/04/1999	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0200/1999	
04/05/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		
01/10/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1998/2044(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148

Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/09803

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	**Committee**	**Reference**	**Date**	**Summary**
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0200/1999 OJ C 279 01.10.1999, p. 0005	20/04/1999	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0369/1999 OJ C 279 01.10.1999, p. 0023-0082	04/05/1999	Summary
European Commission				
Document type		**Reference**	**Date**	**Summary**
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1998)0049	18/02/1998	Summary

Marine pollution: disused offshore oil and gas installations, removal

1998/2044(COS) - 18/02/1998 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: to establish a Community position with a view to combatting the disposal of disused offshore oil and gas installations in European waters.
CONTENT: following the decision by Shell to dispose of its "Brent Spar" oil storage platform by sinking it in a deep area of the North Atlantic and the outrage which this decision provoked, several international initiatives have been taken with a view to changing current methods of disposing of large disused offshore installations. They include the initiative taken by OSPAR or the Convention for the Protection of Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic, which has planned a ministerial level meeting in July 1998 in order to debate this question. Initial debates with a view to finding a unanimous position in this area have been unsuccessful, with the United Kingdom and Norway (the main countries affected by offshore installations) refusing to accept the Commission's proposal to dispose of offshore oil and gas installations by reusing them or bringing them ashore for recycling. The Commission considers, for its part, that there is an overriding Community interest in the question of dismantling or disposing of offshore installations and that there is Community jurisdiction which warrants action in this area. It is most important to avoid allowing the question of dismantling and residual responsibilities from becoming a competitive factor between the Member States. Under these circumstances, the Commission document considers that the Community should take measures. The idea is not to restrict action to the adoption of internal regulations which only affect the fifteen Member States (and would only apply to Norway following a decision by the EEA Joint Committee) but to negotiate and implement a policy for dismantling and disposing of offshore bases at Community level through multilateral agreements which would be concluded in international fora such as OSPAR and would be compatible with Community policies. The OSPAR decision therefore needs to be based on a number of basic principles which at least include the following: - it should be prohibited to dispose of offshore installations at sea; - all disused installations, with the exception of a small number to be identified under certain circumstances (safety, cost, technical and environmental problems) should be completely dismantled and brought ashore for recycling and the safe disposal of the unavoidable scrap; - large concrete installations should be exempt from certain dismantling and recycling requirements in that there is at present no valid technology; - decisions to leave all or part of the installation in place or to dispose of all or part of it at sea should be taken in the context of full consultation with all parties concerned; - the OSPAR decision should ensure that new disused installations (erected after 1 January 1998) are completely dismantled and brought ashore for recycling. The OSPAR decision should also: 1) make provision for the decision to be reviewed at least every 5 years in order to take full account of new scientific and technological methods for dismantling and recycling; 2) make provision for unambiguous title deeds to installations and structures not fully dismantled on the sea bed and for liability for future damage to be clearly established.

Marine pollution: disused offshore oil and gas installations, removal

1998/2044(COS) - 04/05/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Without debate, the European Parliament adopted the resolution by Françoise Grossetête (PPE,FR) on the communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the removal and disposal of disused offshore oil and gas installations. The report welcomes the fact that the reuse, recycling and final disposal on land of disused offshore installations is regarded as the preferred option. The Parliament remains concerned, however, that the implementation of the derogations provided for under the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of Marine Environment of the North

East Atlantic means that major installations can still be disposed of at sea, thereby causing marine pollution by dangerous substances and natural low-activity radioactive waste. The Parliament regrets that OSPAR decision 98/3 does not cover steel installations and neither the cleaning-up nor the removal of offshore installations, but solely their disposal. It also regrets that the decision makes no distinction between existing installations and future ones. Furthermore, the Parliament considers that derogations under the decision should only be granted on a case-by-case basis, in situations where removal could put the safety of workers at risk or might create adverse effects on the environment. It also considers that the cost of removing offshore installations is generally limited compared to the revenues generated by their operation and should be integrated within the investment plans, in accordance with the polluter-pays principle. Fiscal incentives may, according to the report, be used after decommissioning in order to promote the most sustainable use of material recovered. Finally, stressing that the consultation process has been launched too late by the Commission to allow the European Parliament any influence on the Community position during the OSPAR conference, the report calls on the Commission to: 1) take stock of European experience, in Europe including the EEA, with removing installations and to collate it with experience in the rest of the world, particularly the US; 2) produce a comparative study into existing liability arrangements concerning removal and disposal operations and the maintenance of any parts left on the seabed, in the EU, the EEA and the rest of the world; 3) study exisiting possibilities for removing installations and, at the same time, conduct a cost/benefit study for all scenarios (deep water, shallow water, dismantling ashore, towing etc.), whilst assessing and taking full account of the dangers to workers carrying out these operations. Before 2002, the Commission is called upon to submit a proposal based on these studies to prepare the Community's position with a view to the future review of OSPAR decision 98/3 scheduled for 2003.