











Basic information	
2002/0164(COD) COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Regulation	Procedure completed
Forests: protection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution and fires, action 2003-2008 Forest Focus Repealed by 2004/0218(COD) Amended by 2003/0305(COD) Subject 3.10.11 Forestry policy	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur
			Appointed
	ENVI	Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	REDONDO JIMÉNEZ Encarnación (PPE-DE) 02/10/2002
	Former committee responsible		Former rapporteur
			Appointed
	ENVI	Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	REDONDO JIMÉNEZ Encarnación (PPE-DE) 02/10/2002
	Former committee for opinion		Former rapporteur for opinion
			Appointed
	BUDG	Budgets	VIRRANKOSKI Kyösti (ELDR) 12/09/2002
	CONT	Budgetary Control	The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	AGRI	Agriculture and Rural Development	PESÄLÄ Mikko (ELDR) 11/09/2002
Council of the European Union	Council configuration		Meetings
			Date
	Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)		2538
	Environment		2517
	Environment		2491
	Environment		2457
	Environment		2473

European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	Environment	

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
15/07/2002	Legislative proposal published	COM(2002)0404 	Summary
02/09/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
17/10/2002	Debate in Council		
09/12/2002	Debate in Council		
22/01/2003	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
22/01/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A5-0022/2003	
12/02/2003	Debate in Parliament		
13/02/2003	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T5-0059/2003	Summary
13/06/2003	Council position published	08243/1/2003	Summary
03/07/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
07/10/2003	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		Summary
07/10/2003	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A5-0343/2003	
20/10/2003	Debate in Parliament		
21/10/2003	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T5-0439/2003	Summary
06/11/2003	Act approved by Council, 2nd reading		
17/11/2003	Final act signed		
17/11/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		
11/12/2003	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2002/0164(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
Amendments and repeals	Repealed by 2004/0218(COD) Amended by 2003/0305(COD)
Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 175-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/5/19230

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A5-0022/2003	22/01/2003	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T5-0059/2003 OJ C 043 19.02.2004, p. 0279-0330 E	13/02/2003	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A5-0343/2003	07/10/2003	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T5-0439/2003 OJ C 082 01.04.2004, p. 0025-0078 E	21/10/2003	Summary
Council of the EU				
Document type		Reference	Date	Summary
Council statement on its position		09867/1/2003	10/06/2003	
Council position		08243/1/2003 OJ C 233 30.09.2003, p. 0001-0011 E	13/06/2003	Summary
European Commission				
Document type		Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal		COM(2002)0404  OJ C 020 28.01.2003, p. 0067 E	15/07/2002	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position		SEC(2003)0725 	17/06/2003	Summary
Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading		COM(2003)0738 	01/12/2003	Summary
Follow-up document		COM(2008)0006 	22/01/2008	Summary
Follow-up document		SEC(2008)0030 	22/01/2008	
Follow-up document		COM(2010)0430 	26/08/2010	Summary
Follow-up document		SEC(2010)0978 	26/08/2010	
National parliaments				
Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary

Contribution	PT_PARLIAMENT	COM(2010)0430	08/04/2011	
Other institutions and bodies				
Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1368/2002 OJ C 085 08.04.2003, p. 0083-0086	11/12/2002	
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0345/2002 OJ C 128 29.05.2003, p. 0041-0042	12/02/2003	
EU	Implementing legislative act	32006R1737 OJ L 334 30.11.2006, p. 0001-0073	07/11/2006	Summary

Additional information		
Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act
Regulation 2003/2152 OJ L 324 11.12.2003, p. 0001-0008 Summary

Forests: protection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution and fires, action 2003-2008 Forest Focus

2002/0164(COD) - 17/11/2003 - Final act

PURPOSE : to provide a flexible monitoring scheme to assess forest ecosystems. **LEGISLATIVE ACT** : Regulation 2152/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community (Forest Focus). **CONTENT** : the Council approved the amendments adopted by the European Parliament at second reading on the proposal for a Regulation concerning monitoring of forest and environmental interactions in the Community. Consequently, and since the EP's amendments correspond to a compromise agreement reached by the Council, the Regulation is adopted in the form of the Council's Common Position thus amended. The Swedish delegation voted against. The Regulation provides a multi-annual framework covering the period from 2003 to 2006. It aims to provide a flexible monitoring scheme to assess forest ecosystem conditions in a broader context. It also simplifies existing activities by regrouping elements of both regulations under a single framework regulation covering the protection and monitoring of forests. A Community scheme for broad-based, harmonised and comprehensive, long-term monitoring of the condition of forests, is hereby established to: a) continue and further develop: - monitoring of air pollution and air pollution effects and of other agents and factors that have an impact on forests, such as biotic and abiotic factors and factors of anthropogenic origin, - monitoring of forest fires and their causes and effects, - forest fire prevention; b) assess the requirements for and develop the monitoring of soils, carbon sequestration, climate change effects and biodiversity, as well as protective functions of forests; c) continuously evaluate the efficiency of the monitoring activities in the assessment of the condition of forests and the further development of monitoring activity. The scheme shall provide reliable and comparable data and information on the condition of and harmful influences on forests at Community level. It shall also help to evaluate ongoing measures to promote conservation and protection of forests for the benefit of sustainable development, with particular emphasis on actions taken to reduce impacts negatively affecting forests. The scheme will take account of, and where appropriate link to, existing and planned national, European and global monitoring mechanisms and will be in line with relevant international agreements. The financial framework for the implementation of the scheme for the period 2003 to 2006 shall be EUR 61 million, of which EUR 9 million can be used for fire prevention measures. The financial resources shall be increased in the case of accession of new Member States to the European Union. The annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the annual budgetary procedure and the limits of the financial perspective **ENTRY INTO FORCE** : 11/12/2003. It shall apply from 01/01/03.

Forests: protection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution and fires, action 2003-2008 Forest Focus

2002/0164(COD) - 07/11/2006 - Implementing legislative act

ACT: Commission Regulation 1737/2006/EC of 7 November 2006 laying down rules for the implementation of Regulation 2152/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community.

CONTENT: this Regulation lays down the detailed rules for the implementation of:

1) Monitoring air pollution effects on forest ecosystems: this is to be carried out on the basis of the systematic network of observation points and of the network of observation plots for intensive monitoring. By 15 December each year, each Member State shall forward to the Commission the data collected during the preceding year for each Level I point. The number of observation plots (Level II) to be selected for that network shall be limited to 15 for each Member State. By 15 December each year Member States shall forward to the Commission all data measured during the preceding year for each Level II plot.

2) European Forest Fire Information System: the "European Forest Fire Information System" (EFFIS) will be operated by the Joint Research Centre of the Commission. By 1 July each year, each Member State will be obliged to submit common core data for every forest fire in their territory to the Commission for the previous year.

3) Studies, experiments and demonstration projects: the Commission will establish a ranking of priorities for granting Community support to proposals for studies, experiments and demonstration projects and testing on the basis of a pilot phase submitted by the Member States.

4) Competent Bodies: each Member State must designate a competent body to be the contact point for the Commission. Belgium, Germany and Portugal may designate more than one competent body. The competent bodies may be either public-sector bodies or private law entities with a public-service mission and must offer adequate financial guarantees. They must first be approved by the Commission. Their tasks will be to:

- take appropriate measures to prevent irregularities and fraud and, if necessary, bring prosecutions to recover funds lost, wrongly paid or incorrectly used;
- provide the Commission with any information it requests;
- be the intermediary to whom the Community contribution is paid and hold the accounts and records of the receipt and payment of that contribution in support of the national programme;

The Regulation also contains provisions on:

- the information and supporting documents that national programmes must contain;
- the definition of eligible costs;
- amounts lost through irregularities;
- checks, audits and technical visits;
- the tasks of the Scientific Advisory Group;
- access to data.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 03/12/2006

Forests: protection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution and fires, action 2003-2008 Forest Focus

2002/0164(COD) - 15/07/2002 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to present a draft European Parliament and Council Regulation concerning monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community (Forest Focus). CONTENT : the purpose of the present proposal for a European Parliament and Council regulation is the establishment of a new Community scheme on monitoring of forests and environmental interactions to protect the Community's forests. The scheme will be built on the achievements of two Council regulations for monitoring the impacts of atmospheric pollution and of fires on forest ecosystems. The present proposal provides a multi-annual framework covering initially a 6 year period from 2003 to 2008. Co-financing of National Forest Monitoring Programmes in the Member States of up to 50% of the eligible costs is envisaged. Provision has been made to finance the studies and pilot projects required to develop the monitoring of forest bio-diversity, carbon sequestration and soil properties and to enhance existing monitoring activities by giving them an EU-wide scope. EUR 52 million has been proposed for the period 2003-2006, with an annual allocation of EUR 13 million. Forest Focus would be open to the candidate countries. It aims at adapting the scope of the above mentioned regulations to provide a flexible monitoring scheme to assess forest ecosystem conditions in a broader context. It also simplifies existing activities by regrouping elements of both regulations under a single framework regulation covering the protection and monitoring of forests. This new scheme will provide data and information to allow a risk assessment on forest ecosystem condition. Single factors, but in particular the combination of different stress factors can severely damage or destroy forest ecosystems. Information on the trends in forest condition that can be available at an early stage can help to develop appropriate measures to improve forest conditions or to eliminate the stress factors causing damages. Departing from the basic objective indicated above, a set of objectives corresponding to the particular monitoring exercises can be defined. These are as follows: - To provide information on the spatial and temporal variation in forest ecosystem condition, in relation to anthropogenic as well as natural stress factors, for the different eco-regions of the European Union. - To provide information on forest fires and causes of forest fires in the Union and develop models for forest fire prediction and prevention based on the condition of

the forest ecosystem. - To provide quality information that provides a sound basis for political decisions on abating factors affecting the forest ecosystem condition and to devise methods of maintaining and restoring damaged forest ecosystems. - To fulfil obligations that already have been taken up by the Union (e.g. Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, Convention on Biodiversity), to support pan-European and international discussions (e.g. Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests) and to respond to requirements that will evolve in the future (EU Soil Strategy, Clean air for Europe - CAFE, etc).

Forests: protection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution and fires, action 2003-2008 Forest Focus

2002/0164(COD) - 22/01/2008

This report has been prepared by the Commission in accordance with requirements set out in Regulation No (EC) 2152/2002; the "Forest Focus" Regulation. The main purpose of the Regulation is to establish a Community scheme for the long-term monitoring of European forests between 2003 and 2006. Regulation No (EC) 2152/2002 has now been repealed and its main provisions taken over by the LIFE+ Regulation. This analysis, therefore, focuses on the four year "Forest Focus" scheme only.

To recall, Forest Focus centred on the monitoring of atmospheric pollution and how this affects forests, monitoring forest fires, their causes and effects and examine aspects relating to forest fire prevention. The scheme also foresaw the development of new monitoring instruments relating to soil monitoring, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, climate change and the protective role of forests. The Member States are still carrying out a number of studies and experiments, the outcome of which will be known in the course of 2008.

Whilst the Commission was responsible for coordinating, monitoring and developing the scheme the Member States were required to designate a competent authority to manage the national programme. The total Forest Focus budget over the 4-year period was EUR 65 million, including EUR 9 million for fire prevention measures. The EU contribution towards the cost of national programmes stood at between 50% to 75% - depending on the type of activity funded. Forest Focus activities, for each national programme, were divided into a number of activities including: project coordination and management (activities related to the coordination of the national programme); Level I monitoring network (installation and maintenance of a systematic grid net); Level II plots involving intensive monitoring (such as crown condition measurements); forest fire prevention activities (including the European Forest Fire Information System); and Studies and demonstration projects (such as identifying some of the causes of forest fires).

Although various studies under Forest Focus will not be completed until 2008, the Commission undertook an external evaluation of the programme's management and forest conditions for the year 2005. The evaluation was carried out by one UK and one Finish research institute. This evaluators made the following findings:

- The management of the programme has been cost effective.
- Monitoring activities should include, not only the health of forests, but air pollution as well. Other parameters relating to climate change, biodiversity and the protective functions of forests should also be included in future monitoring activities.
- Data from national forest inventories should be taken into account when forest monitoring takes place.
- The monitoring scheme should be continued.

The evaluators expressed some concern that in repealing the Forest Focus Regulation Member States would no longer be obliged to undertake a co-ordinated, EU-wide, inspection of Europe's forests. The main recommendations, as set out by the evaluators, has therefore been taken on board and incorporated into the LIFE+ Regulation. In addition, the EU has adopted the "EU Forest Action Plan 2007-2011". Indeed, the purpose of Action 8 is the establishment of a European Forest Monitoring System.

Further, LIFE+ provides for the establishment of national forest inventories. Given that LIFE+ is based on voluntary participation, the report predicts that, in future, monitoring will be more policy specific driven and include parameters such as climate change, biodiversity and the protective function of forests – rather than a simple continuation of observations based on traditional parameters (as was the case under the "Forest Focus" scheme).

As far as the management of the scheme is concerned, the report notes that the average financial commitment per programme is low. For 2003-2004 it amounted to approximately EUR 0.5 million per contracting party ranging between EUR 20 000 and EUR 2.7 million. For 2005 it was EUR 0.4 million ranging between EUR 20 000 and EUR 2.1 million and for 2006 EUR 0.4 million ranging from EUR 28 000 to EUR 2.1 million. Of this amount, approximately 7% was devoted to the co-ordination and management of the national programmes.

Forests: protection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution and fires, action 2003-2008 Forest Focus

2002/0164(COD) - 26/08/2010 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents its final report on the implementation of the Forest Focus scheme according to Regulation (EC) No 2152/2003 concerning monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community (Forest Focus).

The Forest Focus Regulation aimed to establish a scheme for long term monitoring of the condition and of the environmental interactions on forests in the European Union. The scheme included the continuation of the existing monitoring networks on air pollution and its impacts on forests, forest fires, their causes and effects and the co financing of forest fire prevention activities. It also broadened the scope of EU forest monitoring through the gathering of information on soils, biodiversity, carbon sequestration, climate change effects and protective functions of forests.

As mentioned in the January 2008 report, the implementation of the Forest Focus Regulation took more time than the four years envisaged. This report complements the previous one and mainly aims at reporting on the use of the Forest Focus budget.

Results: in general, **the objectives have been fulfilled** and the high implementation rate can be considered as a success. Former forest monitoring and forest fire prevention legislation has been given an integrated approach by Forest Focus. Under the scheme, the **Forest Focus database** has been created and contains aggregated data and information on the state of EU forests.

The delay in setting up the scheme has caused problems for the national competent bodies in charge of the implementation of the activities in the national programmes. However, only in exceptional cases were part of the activities withdrawn from what was initially planned. Forest-related information has been gathered, notably on soil and biodiversity, broadening the scope of forest monitoring for the first time. The information on soils and above ground biodiversity form part of the **Biosoil database** established under the scheme.

A significant percentage of the funding was provided for the development of research studies and demonstration projects on biodiversity, carbon stocks, forest soil biodiversity, forest fires, ozone, climate change, genetic diversity, fungi, lichens and other forest related issues.

As regards forest fires, the **European Forest Fire Information System, EFFIS**, has been established and further developed under the scheme. Especially noteworthy are the modules on Natura 2000 and forests, estimated atmospheric emissions or post fire soil erosion that were created. EFFIS is now a core element of European forest fire monitoring and its maintenance is assured until the end of 2010 by means of a pilot project requested by the European Parliament.

Financial Implementation: from the total budget of the scheme (EUR 65 million), a total amount of EUR 56,468,222 was allocated to perform the national programmes. A total of EUR 7,587,586 was allocated for the agreement with the Joint Research Centre, the execution of the mid term review of the scheme, the agreement with ICP-Forest, and for the expert meetings and conferences.

A total amount of **EUR 53,342,555.09** was spent on the scheme. The activities in the national programmes accounted for EUR 45,772,306.10 and the rest of the Forest Focus budget was EUR 7,570,248.99.

An analysis of the expenditure per activity shows that the **larger part of the funding, 43% has gone to the intensive air pollution monitoring** (Level II network). Following in magnitude, 32% has gone on studies and demonstration projects. 11% was spent in forest fire related activities. The systematic Level I monitoring network used only 9% of the total budget and 5% of the budget went to coordination and management activities.

The assessment of the expenditure by Member State and activity shows that most of the financial resources were devoted to the intensive monitoring of forest health, followed by the development of studies and demonstration projects and by fire monitoring activities.

Conclusions: a number of conclusions can be drawn from on the implementation of the scheme:

- **forest monitoring in the EU** has devoted the majority of its financing resources to the intensive monitoring network (Level II). This network does not provide enough representative information on the state of EU forests and the resources and funds deployed in such a network are very high;
- **traditional crown condition monitoring** has been gathered already for 20 years since EU forests started showing symptoms of acid rain damage. Latest results have shown that forest condition is more stable nowadays and that sulphur content levels have decreased whilst nitrogen levels remain stable. Crown condition can still be considered as a representative and cost effective indicator for the state of forests. Nevertheless, it gives rough information on forest health and it should be complemented with other information on visible damage;
- **other indicators should be included** in future forest monitoring systems, using networks that provide consistent information at EU level;
- **forest soil and biodiversity monitoring** should be continued in the future, as they deliver crucial information for EU policy making, but also for contributing to international conventions, such as the UNCCC or the CBD.

With regard to **forest fires** and in the absence of a legal basis, the question of how to assure continuation of EFFIS and the Commission's expert group on forest fires will need to be addressed in the context of the new financial perspectives and on the Green Paper on forest protection and information.

The Forest Focus Regulation was repealed in 2006 by the [Life+ Regulation](#) (EC) No 614/2007. So far, there is one forest monitoring project ongoing under the Life+ Regulation, conceived for a two-year period only (2009 and 2010) and unlike the Forest Focus scheme, it is based on a voluntary approach.

The [Green Paper](#) adopted on 1 March 2010 presents the current state of play of EU forests and sets out the main challenges they face as regards climate change, as part of the follow-up to the [White Paper on adapting to climate change](#). It also refers to existing forest information systems and the tools to protect forests, and raises a series of questions relevant to the development of future policy options. A public consultation, to which this report may contribute, is open until end of July 2010. The follow up to the Forest Focus Regulation, the more recent action under Life+ and the wider issue of forest monitoring will be taken into consideration in the context of the next steps after the Green Paper

Forests: protection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution and fires, action 2003-2008 Forest Focus

2002/0164(COD) - 13/02/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Encarnion REDONDO JIMENEZ (EPP-ED, Spain) on the Commission's proposal. (Please refer to the document dated 22/01/02.) In addition, Parliament inserted the following amendments: - new monitoring measures and the timetables for

their preparation will be coordinated with the Commission's initiatives and planned proposals to monitor biodiversity, climate change, carbon sequestration and soil; - the mid-term review will focus on the experience with the new modules related to biodiversity, effects on climate change and soil.

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2002/0164(COD) - 13/06/2003 - Council position

The common position is substantially in accordance with the positions taken by the Commission and the Parliament, insofar as it: - confirms all the objectives and essential elements of the Commission's proposal which were also supported by the European Parliament. However, the Commission cannot support the changes the Council and the Parliament made on comitology and on the inclusion of forest fire prevention measures and the corresponding budget increase; - takes the greatest possible account of the opinion of the European Parliament by taking on, in letter or in spirit, a great number of its amendments. The Council took note of the abstentions of the Italian, Portuguese and Spanish delegations. The common position responds to the concerns expressed by some Member States by introducing changes to the Commission's amended proposal with respect to the inclusion of forest fire prevention measures, the corresponding budget increase, as well as regards the comitology procedure. The EP at first reading adopted 46 amendments to the proposal. The common position incorporates (totally, in part or in principle, by means of identical or similar wording, or in spirit) 29 amendments. Out of the 45 amendment made by the European Parliament at first reading, 30 of these have been incorporated in the common position, fully, in part, or in principle. The remaining 15 amendments were not incorporated for reasons of - depending on the case - legal coherence and legislative technique, clarity in technical terminology, practical feasibility. The amendments that have been incorporated concern: - the addition of a reference to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change; - the future scheme, it has to be in line with international commitments; - the subsidiarity issue and "forest ecosystems" has been replaced by "forests" to ensure consistency with the new definitions; - a more general reference to national, European and international monitoring mechanisms; The following amendments have not been incorporated: - those relating to the forest fire prevention measures. In Article 5(2) of the common position specific forest fire prevention measures (awareness-raising campaigns and special training) have been included in order to allow Member States which have not yet done so to include them in the rural development programmes by 31 December 2005; - the amendment relating to the budget. The Council has decided to include the forest fire prevention measures on a temporary basis only with an additional budget of 0.5 million euro per year; - other amendments were not incorporated in particular, because they go beyond the scope of the proposal or because they develop unnecessary administrative details.

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2002/0164(COD) - 01/12/2003 - Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading

The Commission can accept all 12 amendments adopted as part as a global compromise package. The amendments accepted by the Commission aim to: - incorporate into Forest Focus forest fire prevention measures and thus to broaden the scope of the scheme and to allow financial support to these measures, which are not covered by the Regulation on Rural Development or not covered by the rural development programmes; - allow exceptionally retrospective co-financing in order to ensure the continuity of monitoring activities. There is a need to allow expenditure incurred by a Member State to be eligible for co-financing if it relates to actions that were launched after 1 January 2003 and before the entry into force of this Regulation provided that these actions have not been completed when the Commission approves the related national programme; - propose a shorter execution period 2003-2006 (instead of 2003-2008). - seek for the necessary adaptations concerning the review ("mid-term review" is replaced by "review"), a shorter period for the national programmes (2 years instead of 4 years), reporting by Member States; - propose that the Commission may finance activities of the Scientific Advisory Group. This group has a central role in the scheme and the amendment aims at further strengthening this expert group; - propose in particular an increased budget of EUR 61m (instead of EUR 52m + EUR 2m in the Common position) out of which EUR 9m are earmarked for fire prevention measures; - seek to get full compliance with the new financial regulation; - propose a report by the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, reviewing the effectiveness of the scheme in order to provide a basis for any decision on the continuation of these activities after 2006.

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2002/0164(COD) - 17/06/2003 - Commission communication on Council's position

The Commission can accept most of the changes made by the Council and it is well noted that these changes clarify in particular the future collaboration between Member States and the Commission as well as with other bodies. However, due to the fact that forest fire prevention measures were incorporated in the Regulation and due to the fact that a change in the comitology procedure was made, which was not justified, the Commission therefore cannot support the Common Position. It has therefore made a statement in the minutes Environment Council's meeting.

Forests: protection and monitoring of atmospheric pollution and fires, action 2003-2008 Forest Focus

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Encarnación REDONDO JIMÉNEZ (EPP-ED, Spain) and made several amendments to the common position. The principal amendments are as follows: - the objectives of the scheme should include the development of fire prevention methods; - the new scheme will continue the prevention measures introduced by Regulation 2158/92/EEC; - the scheme will run from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2006; - the financial framework will be EUR 61 million, of which EUR 9 million can be used for fire prevention measures; - competent bodies designated by Member States, if they are private bodies, must have a public service mission providing adequate financial guarantees; - expenditure incurred by Member States in carrying out national programmes approved by the Commission will exceptionally be eligible for co-financing if those actions were launched after 01/01/03 and before the date of entry into force of the regulation, provided the actions were not complete when the Commission decided on the national programmes.