

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(74) 1856 final

Brussels, 18 November 1974

DRAFT COUNCIL RESOLUTION

concerning a revised list of second-category pollutants
to be studied as part of the Programme of Action on the Environment

(submitted to the Council by the Commission)

COM(74) 1856 final

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

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Part II, Title I Chapter 11 of the Commission's Environmental Programme as approved by the Council on 22 November 1973 deals with objective evaluation of risks to human health and the environment from pollution. In this chapter two categories of pollutants are considered.

Priority is to be given to pollutants included in the first category, which have been chosen on the grounds both of their toxicity and of the current state of knowledge of their significance in the health and ecological fields.

The list of second-category pollutants was given as a guide, and it was agreed that the Commission would propose a definitive list by 31 July 1974.

With a view to drawing up this list, the Commission conducted a study whose results were discussed by a group of specialists in toxicology, ecology and environmental hygiene. This group of experts considered the pollutants mentioned in the second-category list of the Environmental Programme in the light of the following factors:

- quantities present and persistence in the environment;
- effect on the population as a whole or on particular population groups;
- toxic effects on human beings and if possible on fauna and flora;
- health and ecological consequences of prolonged exposure to small doses.

A number of other pollutants were considered in addition to those mentioned in the list.

The following conclusions may be drawn from this study:

Most of the available data on acute or chronic toxicity relate to a limited number of well-known pollutants. Where a substance has only recently been introduced or is not widely used, or when it is of low toxicity, little or no information is available.

Various categories of substances such as dyes, organic solvents and organic dusts include several hundred chemical compounds. A great deal of scientific information exists in this field but not much of it is accessible.

In most documents, especially in comparatively old ones, not enough information is given on analytical techniques, experimental conditions and clinical aspects. Experimental studies are carried out on a wide variety of animals or plants and employ various dosing techniques, with the results that the findings cannot be objectively compared.

Long-term effects are known for only a few substances and have been clearly determined only where the substances are very noxious. It is thus often impossible to draw any general conclusions from this information. Moreover, substances originally regarded as harmless are subsequently found to be toxic or noxious. Such substances must then be included in the Environmental Programme.

Bearing these factors in mind, the Commission proposes the following revised list of second-category pollutants.

Studies of each of these pollutants will be conducted by the Commission in accordance with the same objectives and operating procedures as for first-category pollutants. The list may be revised as new products are marketed or specific noxious or toxic effects are discovered.

A number of pollutants have been added to the provisional list of second-category pollutants in the Environmental Programme.

AIR : barium, vinyl chloride;
pesticides, phtalates, substances having an unpleasant odour or taste
(excluding mercaptans and hydrogen sulphide), thallium.

WATER : ammonia, anionic detergents, asbestos, beryllium, cadmium, molybdenum, nickel, nitrates, nitrites, phthalates, selenium, silicon (organic compounds), tellurium, titanium, uranium.

The following pollutants which were included in the list have been omitted:

AIR : ammonia, beryllium, chlorine, hydrochloric acid, nitrosamines, organic dusts.

WATER : nitrogen derivatives: renamed ammonia, nitrates, nitrites; iron.

Draft Council Resolution concerning a revised list of
second-category pollutants to be studied as part
of the Programme of Action on the Environment

The Council of the European Communities,

HAVING REGARD TO the draft resolution put forward by the Commission;

WHEREAS risks to human health and the environment from pollution must be objectively evaluated;

WHEREAS such an evaluation is necessary to limit the levels of pollutants in the environment and to determine values for the quality of these products;

WHEREAS there are gaps in the knowledge of pollutants and their effects and thorough study and research is necessary in this field;

WHEREAS the pollutants listed in the first category of the Programme of Action on the Environment of the European Communities (1) are already being investigated;

WHEREAS a definitive list of second-category pollutants is to be drawn up as part of this Programme;

HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

(1) Official Journal C 112 of 20 December 1973

Revised version of the list of second-category pollutants set out in the Programme of Action on the Environment for investigation by the Commission in connection with the measures under the above Programme to combat pollution and nuisance.

AIR

- antimony
- barium
- cadmium
- fluorine
- hydrogen sulphide
- mercaptans
- nickel
- pesticides
- phtalates
- substances having an unpleasant odour or taste (excluding mercaptans and hydrogen sulphide)
- thallium
- vinyl chloride

WATER

- ammonia
- anionic detergents
- antimony
- asbestos
- barium
- beryllium
- bleaching agents
- boron
- cadmium
- chlorine and its compounds
- cobalt
- dyes
- molybdenum
- nickel
- nitrates
- nitrites
- organic solvents
- pesticides
- phosphorus and its compounds
- phtalates
- selenium
- silicon and its organic compounds
- substances having an unpleasant odour or taste
- tellurium
- thallium
- titanium
- uranium
- vanadium