

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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The place and role of a preventive policy for
the environment in a balanced development of
economic activities within the whole of the Community

Waste management
including the development of clean technologies and
the question of recycling

(Communication from the Commission to the Council)

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The place and role of a preventive policy for
the environment in a balanced development of
economic activities within the whole of the Community

1. Relationships between environmental policy and socio-economic development.

The Council may wish to reaffirm the importance of environmental policy by recalling and underlining that such a policy constitutes, in the realisation of a balanced development of economic activities in the whole of the Community, both a policy for the sound management of natural resources (the natural environment, renewable and non-renewable natural resources, space, time) and also a policy for the improvement of living conditions (improvement of the quality of economic development and of the quality of daily life).

Moreover, far from looking towards the past and being nothing more than a policy for "repairing the damage caused by development or industrialisation", environmental policy should appear as a policy capable of optimising the management of natural resources so as to ensure the best conditions for economic development and solidarity with future generations. (1)

2. This place of environmental policy in a policy for balanced development of economic activities within the Community will be all the more important in that environmental policy will turn more and more towards the prevention (of pollution and nuisances, of thoughtless exploitation and waste of resources, of the harmful effects of development on the quality of life) and to the optimisation of the use of natural resources while responding at the same time as other policies to the demands of investment and employment. ((2), see page 2)

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(1) The declaration of Mr. d'Ornano to the Council on 30 May 1978

1. If the necessity and the urgency of a preventive policy is evident, it is necessary on the one hand to determine the instruments which lend themselves best to the realisation of this policy, and on the other hand to orient the policy towards measures susceptible of contributing to the solution of the economic and social difficulties which the Community is experiencing at the present time.

2. The work already realised or begun by the Community since 1973 in applying its environment action programme already constitutes legal and technical instruments which are important in a policy intended to prevent the creation of pollution and nuisances.

Annex I gives a list of the principle directives, decisions and recommendations which have been adopted by the Council in this field or which are still awaiting adoption by the Council. Ministers may wish to give their views on the state of advancement of the work within the Community with a view to preventing and reducing pollution and nuisances as well as on the urgency of rapidly achieving the examination of the different propositions which are still in discussion.

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From page 1

The European Communities environmental action programme adopted in 1973 stressed the need to frame a preventive policy for the environment which would initially supplement and then replace curative action. This programme states that "the best environment policy consists in preventing the creation of pollution or nuisances at source, rather than subsequently trying to counteract their effects. It is therefore necessary to evaluate the effects on the quality of life and on the natural environment at any measure that is adopted or contemplated at national or Community level and which is liable to affect these factors".

In a Resolution of 17 May 1977, the Council of the European Communities updated the 1973 programme of action and clarified its approach by requesting that it be examined whether to harmonize the various Member States' laws and regulations governing the procedures for assessing the effects of major environmental plans and projects.

5. Ministers may also wish to consider the development of other instruments of a preventive policy for the environment within the meaning of that term given in paragraph 1 above. In particular, Ministers may wish to give their opinion on :

- the objectives and the procedures of impact studies, (cf doc. R/1450/78 (ENV 82) Annex I and Title IV, Ch 1 of the Communities Action Programme on the Environment 1977 - 1981 OJ C 139 of 13.6.77),
- the role of economic instruments in the development of preventive policy: charges, taxes, aids of various sorts (funds, low interest rates, rapid amortisations etc.),
- the development of a policy for developing clean technologies (cf separate document),
- the development of "European inventions on the quality of life".

6. Ministers may also wish to consider preventive aspects of environmental policy from the point of view of

- employment
- consumption of resources and the preservation of the natural heritage
- inflation
- social costs
- the balance of payments.

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To this end they may wish, either in the course of the meeting on December 18, 1978 or in the course of later meetings, to examine to what extent an environmental policy based on a rational management of resources and susceptible of leading to transformations in certain types of production and consumption, may :-

- have a global beneficial effect on the level of employment, ^{1/}
- reduce inflation ^{2/},
- improve the balance of payments,
- reduce social costs, in particular by contributing to the improvement of public health.

7. Finally, Ministers may wish to discuss the necessity, in order to ensure the success of a preventive policy for the environment, of conducting a wide-scale information action before the public, and before political circles and different professional groups. (cf on this subject the proposals of Minister d'Ornano on the creation of a documentation centre).

^{1/} For the employment aspects of certain environment programmes see the study "Characteristics of a job-related environment programme for the Community" by Meissner/Hödl.

^{2/} The economy of resources and raw materials should give an anti-inflationary effect.

LIST OF THE PROPOSALS ADOPTED
OR BEING DISCUSSED BY THE COUNCIL

COMMISSION PROPOSALS ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL

TITLE	Date of the decision	References
1) Directive relating to the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles (*) Adaptation (see decisions adopted by the Commission) Modification	6.2.70 7.11.73 8.3.77	OJ L 42 23.2.70 OJ L 321 22.11.73 OJ L 66 12.3.77
2) Directive relating to measures to be taken against air pollution by gases from positive-ignition engines of motor vehicles (*) Adaptations (see decisions adopted by the Commission)	20.3.70 28.5.74 30.11.76	OJ L 76 6.4.70 OJ L 159 15.6.74 OJ L 32 3.2.77
3) Directive on measures to be taken against emissions of pollutants from diesel engines for use in motor vehicles (*)	2.8.72	OJ L 190 20.8.72
4) Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to detergents	22.11.73	OJ L 347 17.12.73
5) Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to methods of testing the biodegradability of anionic surfactants (*)	22.11.73	OJ L 347 17.12.73
6) Decision concluding the convention for the prevention of marine pollution from land-based sources	3.3.1975	OJ L 194 25.7.1975
7) Decision concerning Community participation in the Interim Commission established on the bases of resolution No. III of the convention for the prevention of marine pollution from land-based sources	3.3.1975	OJ L 194 25.7.1975

(*) These directives relate to the approximation of the laws of the Member States.

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| 8. Resolution on energy and the environment | 3.3.1975 | OJ C 168
25.7.1975 |
| 9. Resolution on the convention for the prevention of marine pollution from land-based sources | 3.3.1975 | OJ C 168
25.7.1975 |
| 10. Recommendation regarding cost allocation and action by public authorities on environmental matters | 3.3.1975 | OJ L 194
25.7.1975 |
| 11. Directive on mountain and hill farming and farming in certain less-favoured areas | 28.4.1975 | OJ L 128
19.5.1975 |
| 12. Regulation (EEC) No. 1365/75 on the creation of a European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions | 26.5.1975 | OJ L 139
30.5.1975 |
| 13. Directive concerning the quality required of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water in the Member States | 16.6.75 | OJ L 194
25.7.75 |
| 14. Directive on the disposal of waste oils | 16.6.75 | OJ L 194
25.7.75 |
| 15. Resolution concerning a revised list of second-category pollutants to be studied as part of the programme of action of the European Communities on the environment | 24.6.75 | OJ C 168
25.7.75 |
| 16. Decision establishing a common procedure for the exchange of information between the surveillance and monitoring networks based on data relating to atmospheric pollution caused by certain compounds and suspended particulates | 24.6.75 | OJ L 194
25.7.75 |
| 17. Decision adopting a programme on the management and storage of radioactive waste | 26.6.75 | OJ L 178
9.7.75 |
| 18. Directive on waste | 15.7.75 | OJ L 194
25.7.75 |
| 19. Resolution on the adaptation to technical progress of Directives or other Community rules on the protection and improvement of the environment | 15.7.75 | OJ C 168
25.7.75 |
| 20. Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels (*) | 24.11.75 | OJ L 307
27.11.75 |

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| 21. Directive concerning the quality of bathing water | 8.12.75 | OJ L 31
5.2.76 |
| 22. Decision establishing a common procedure for the setting up and constant updating of an inventory of sources of information on the environment in the Community | 8.12.75 | OJ L 31
5.2.76 |
| 23. Directive on the disposal of polychlorinated biphenyls and polychlorinated terphenyls | 6.4.76 | OJ L 108
26.4.76 |
| 24. Directive on pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community | 4.5.76 | OJ L 129
18.5.76 |
| 25. Directive on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to the restrictions on the marketing and the use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (*) | 27.7.76 | OJ L 262
27.9.76 |
| 26. Directive on biological screening of the population for lead | 29.3.77 | OJ L 105
28.4.77 |
| 27. Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the measures to be taken against the emission of pollutants from diesel engines for use in wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors (*) | 28.6.77 | OJ L 220
29.8.77 |
| 28. Decision concluding the Convention for the protection of the Rhine against chemical pollution and an additional Agreement to the Agreement, signed in Bern on 29.4.1963, concerning the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Pollution | 25.7.77 | OJ L 240
19.9.77 |
| 29. Decision concluding the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and the Protocol for the prevention of the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by dumping from ships and aircraft | 25.7.77 | OJ L 240
19.9.77 |
| 30. Directive on classification, labelling and packaging of paints, varnishes, glues, printing inks and related products (*) | 7.11.77 | OJ L 303
28.11.77 |
| 31. Decision establishing a common procedure for the exchange of information on the quality of surface fresh water in the Community | 12.12.77 | OJ L 334
24.12.77 |
| 32. Decision adopting a European Economic Community concerted research project on the growth of large urban concentrations | 7.2.78 | OJ L 45
16.2.78 |

33. Directive on waste from the titanium dioxide industry	20.2.78	OJ L 54 25.2.78
34. Directive on toxic and dangerous waste	20.3.78	OJ L 84 31.3.78
35. Resolution on fluorocarbons in the environment	30.5.78	OJ C 133 7.6.78
36. Resolution setting up an action programme of the European Communities on the control and reduction of pollution caused by hydrocarbons discharged at sea	26.6.78	OJ C 162 8.7.78
37. Directive on the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous preparations (pesticides) (*)	26.6.78	OJ L 206 29.7.78
38. Directive on the lead content of petrol (*)	29.6.78	OJ L 197 22.7.78
39. Directive on the quality of fresh waters needing protection or improvement in order to support fish life	18.7.78	OJ L 222 14.8.78

(*) These directives relate to the approximation of the laws of the Member States.

Commission proposals adopted by the Council and/or the representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council

TITLE	Date of the decision	Reference
1. Agreement of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting in Council on information for the Commission and for the Member States with a view to possible harmonization throughout the Communities of urgent measures concerning the protection of the environment	5.3.73	OJ C 9 15.3.73
2. Declaration of the Council of the European Communities and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting in the Council of 22 November 1973 on the programme of action of the European Communities on the environment	22.11.73	OJ C 112 20.12.73
3. Agreement of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the European Communities, meeting in Council of 15.7.74 supplementing the Agreement of 5.3.1973 on information for the Commission and for the Member States with a view to possible harmonization throughout the Communities of urgent measures concerning the protection of the environment	15.7.1974	OJ C 86 20.7.74
4. Resolution of the Council of the European Communities and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 17 May 1977 on the continuation and implementation of a European Community policy and action programme on the environment	17.5.77	OJ C 139 13.6.77

Acts adopted by the Commission

TITLE	Date of the decision	References
1. Commission directive adapting to technical progress the Council Directive of 6 February 1970, relating to the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles (*)	7.11.73	OJ L 321 22.11.73
2. Commission recommendation to Member States concerning the protection of the architectural and natural heritage	20.12.1974	OJ L 21 28.1.1975
3. Commission recommendation to Member States concerning the protection of birds and their habitats	20.12.1974	OJ L 21 28.1.1975
4. Commission recommendation to the Member States invited to attend the intergovernmental meeting in Barcelona	19.12.1975	OJ L 9 16.1.1976
5. Commission decision setting up a Committee on Waste Management	21.4.1976	OJ L 115 1.5.1976
6. Directive adapting to technical progress Council Directive 70/220/EEC of 20.3.1970 on measures to be taken against air pollution by gases from positive ignition engines installed in motor vehicles (*)	30.11.76	OJ L 32 3.2.77
7. Commission decision appointing the members of the Committee on Waste Management	23.12.1976	OJ L 354 24.12.1976
8. (Commission) Decision setting up a Scientific Advisory Committee to examine the toxicity and ecotoxicity of chemical compounds	28.6.78	OJ L 198 22.7.78

PROPOSALS BEING DISCUSSED BY THE COUNCIL

TITLE	Date of submission	Reference
1. Proposal for a Directive concerning forestry measures	26.2.1974	OJ C 44 19.4.1974
2. Proposal for a decision concluding the European Convention for the protection of international watercourses against pollution	11.12.1974	OJ C 99 2.5.1975
3. Proposal for a directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to ceramic articles intended to come into contact with food (limitation of extractable quantities of lead and cadmium)	31.12.1974	OJ C 46 27.2.1975
4. Proposal for a directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound level for pneumatic concrete-breakers and jackhammers (*)	31.12.1974	OJ C 82 14.4.1975
5. Proposal for a directive on the reduction of water pollution caused by wood pulp mills in the Member States	20.1.1975	OJ C 99 2.5.1975
6. Proposal for a directive on air quality standards for lead	24.4.1975	OJ C 151 7.7.1975
7. Proposal for a directive relating to the quality of water for human consumption	31.7.1975	OJ C 214 18.9.1975
8. Proposal for a directive on the approximation of laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound level and to the exhaust system of motorcycles (*)	17.12.1975	OJ C 54 8.3.1976
9. Proposal for a directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound-emission level for current generators for power supply (*)	30.12.1975	OJ C 54 8.3.1976
10. Proposal for a directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound-emission level for current generators for welding (*)	30.12.1975	OJ C 54 8.3.1976

11. Proposal for a directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound-emission level for tower cranes (*)	30.12.1975	OJ C 54 8.3.1976
12. Proposal for a directive on the use of fuel-oils with the aim of decreasing sulphurous emissions	30.12.1975	OJ C 54 8.3.1976
13. Proposal for a directive concerning the dumping of wastes at sea	12.1.1976	OJ C 40 20.2.1976
14. Resolution concerning the determination of criteria for sulphur dioxide and suspended particulate matter in urban atmospheres	25.2.76	COM (76) 48
15. Proposal for a directive concerning health protection standards for sulphur dioxide and suspended particulate matter in urban atmospheres	25.2.1976	OJ C 63 19.3.1976
16. Proposal for a directive on the limitation of noise emission from subsonic aircraft	26.4.1976	OJ C 126 9.6.1976
17. Communication concerning the objective evaluation of the risks to human health from pollution by some persistent organo-chlorine compounds	29.6.1976	COM (76) 312 24.6.1976
18. Proposal for a directive concerning the placing of EEC-accepted plant protection products on the market	4.8.1976	OJ C 212 9.9.1976
19. Proposal for a directive prohibiting the placing on the market and the use of plant protection products containing certain active substances	5.8.1976	OJ C 200 26.8.1976
20. Proposal for a directive on the sixth modification of the directive of 27.6.1967 on the approximation of the laws of Member States relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances	21.9.1976	OJ C 260 5.11.1976
21. Proposal for a directive relating to the quality requirements for waters favourable to shellfish growth	5.11.1976	OJ C 283 30.11.1976
22. Communication from the Commission to the Council concerning the determination of criteria for noise	3.12.1976	COM (76) 646 3.12.1976
23. Proposal for a directive on bird conservation	20.12.1976	OJ C 24 1.2.1977
24. Draft recommendation to the Member States regarding methods of evaluating the cost of pollution control to industry	16.12.1977	OJ C 10 12.1.1978

(Special Council Meeting on the afternoon of December 18, 1978)

Waste management
including the development of clean technologies and
the question of recycling

1. The Community's waste management policy, as defined in the Environment Action Programme 1977 - 1981, is based on the following principles :
 - (a) preventing the production of waste;
 - (b) the recycling and reuse of waste;
 - (c) the safe elimination of residual waste.

2. The Council directive of July 25, 1975 on wastes (OJ L 194) contained a provision that Member States should take appropriate steps to encourage the prevention, recycling and processing of waste, the extraction of raw materials and possibly of energy therefrom and any other process for the re-use of waste.

3. Clean technologies : Ministers may wish to consider the role of clean technologies as far as the prevention of production of waste is concerned. For the purposes of their discussion Ministers may wish to understand the term 'clean technologies' as referring to those manufacturing processes which prevent pollution and the generation of waste rather than processes which may produce a great deal of pollution or waste and then require :
 - (a) the installation of costly purification systems (whose effectiveness is often limited), and/or
 - (b) measures for the recovery, reuse or safe elimination of the waste.

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4. Ministers may wish to discuss the availability, both from the technical and the economic point of view, of clean technologies which would make possible a very strict limitation on the discharge of products listed in the annex of the Council's directive on the discharge of dangerous substances to the aquatic environment (OJ L 129 - 18th May 1976).

They may also wish to consider the availability of clean technologies as far as the discharge of certain dangerous substances to air is concerned as well as those technologies which in themselves result in the production of lesser quantities of waste thereby reducing the problem of eventual disposal.

5. Ministers may wish to consider what action might be appropriate either at Community or national level to promote research and development, if there is to be a rapid evolution of clean technologies. It may be desirable to decide on the carrying out of a preliminary study to indicate priority sectors for such research action.
6. Ministers may also wish to discuss :
- (a) the exchange of scientific and technical information relating to clean technologies;
 - (b) possible data-banks containing information on clean technologies and cooperation between data banks;
 - (c) possible economic incentives, at Community or national level, to promote the development and application of clean technologies;
 - (d) the elaboration of economic models, either at the micro- or the macro-level, to demonstrate the economic interest and impact of clean technologies.
7. Recycling, recovery, reuse : Ministers may wish to consider the following facts :

+ Industrial Waste arisings in the EEC include over 115 million tonnes per annum of partly recoverable materials

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(metals, paper, rubber, plastics, textiles and glass and a small proportion of chemicals). A very high proportion of these recoverable materials arising from industrial sources is already reclaimed. In addition, there are large amounts of other industrial waste materials that can be categorised as chemical wastes (around 40 m tpa), mining wastes and ash from pulverised fuel (PFA) (over 200 m tpa), agricultural wastes (over 1,000 m tpa if manure is included) and food wastes (about 100 m tpa). Only a small proportion of these are currently reclaimed. 5 - 10 m tpa of chemical wastes probably could be recovered, about 50 m tpa of agricultural and food wastes (excluding manure) and over 150 m tpa of mining wastes mainly as land recovery and PFA.

Total Post Consumer waste arising in the EEC is about 135 m tpa of this :

- + Domestic and Trade Waste arising in the EEC amount to about 80 m tpa of which trade arisings probably account for around 20%. This 80 m tpa includes about 39 m tpa of recoverable materials and more than 20 m tpa of organic (mainly kitchen) wastes.
- + There are about 55 m tpa of other Post Consumer Waste mainly scrap metal but including tyres, waste oils etc. Only a small proportion of the recoverable materials is reclaimed from municipal solid waste, leaving for additional reclamation an estimated 4,5 m tpa of ferrous and non-fer metals (mainly in the form of cans and other packaging); 25 m tpa of paper and board, over half of which arises from discarded packaging materials about 10 - 15% from newspapers and magazines and the balance from other printing and writing paper; and about 7 m tpa of glass, 3 m tpa of plastic (largely from discarded packaging), 2 m tpa of textiles (clothes, furnishings etc), 1 m tpa of waste oils and a small amount of rubber.

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- + A small proportion of the available municipal solid waste is reclaimed as compost (about 5% of arisings) or usable energy (less than 10%).
 - + Of the 55 m tpa other Post Consumer Wastes arising from about 10 - 20 m tpa is unrecovered ferrous metal and about 1 m tpa is unrecovered non-ferrous metal. These arise either as obsolete goods that are not recovered (about 1 m tpa as cars) or in products where the proportion of the material in the product is small. The latter applies particularly to non-ferrous metals.
 - + The total potential value of annual EEC arisings of unrecovered materials is probably in excess of 10,000 million EUA. Potential import saving could be between 5,000 - 7,000 million EUA.
8. Ministers may wish to comment on the relative attractiveness (in terms of the net value per tonne) on the various methods of recovering and recycling waste, such as (a) the recycling of non-ferrous metals, (b) the recycling of good quality paper, (c) the re-uses of glass containers, (d) the recycling of thermoplastics and tyres, (e) the retreading of tyres, (f) the recycling of some textiles, (g) the recycling and the re-use of waste oils, (h) the use of straw to produce paper pulp, (i) the recycling of ferrous metals, (j) the recycling of mixed paper to board, (k) the cleaning and recycling of solvents, and (l) the production of animal feedstuffs from food wastes.
9. Ministers may wish to comment on national experiences with regard to particular aspects of recycling, such as segregation of waste at source (selective collection) and mechanical sorting or the design of products so as to increase durability, to facilitate recycling recovery or re-use, or to permit easier disposal as residual waste.

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10. Ministers may also wish to give their views on possible further actions in this area, including actions at the Community level (some of which may of course be already covered by the Environment Programme (1)). They may for example wish to discuss such possibilities as taxes on obsolescence, incentives for better product design, and different administrative or economic systems designed to promote the re-use of material and energy of all kinds.

(1) OJ C 139 of June 13, 1977