

European Communities

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Working Documents

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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Public Health and the Environment

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 334/74) for a decision on the/reduction of pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community.

Rapporteur: Mr A. PREMOLI

By letter of 4 November 1974 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 235 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the proposal for a Council decision on the reduction of pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community.

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Public Health and the Environment as the committee responsible.

On 18 November 1974 the Committee on Public Health and the Environment appointed Mr Premoli rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meetings of 26 November and 2 and 3 December 1974.

At the meeting of 2 and 3 December the Committee on Public Health and the Environment adopted the proposal for a resolution unanimously, with one abstention.

Present: Mr Della Briotta, chairman; Mr Adams, Mr Albertsen, Mr Antoniozzi, Lord Bessborough, Mr Cipolla, Mrs Fenner, Mr Gibbons, Mr Van der Gun, Mr Jahn, Mr Jakobsen, Mr Willi Müller, Mr Noè, Mr Nyborg, Mr Rosati, and Mr Springorum.

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The Committee on Public Health and the Environment hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution, together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision on the reduction of pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community.

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (COM(74) 1706 final);
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 235 of the EEC Treaty (Doc.334/74);
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Public Health and the Environment (Doc.393/74);
 - aware of the necessity to standardize the provisions on the aquatic environment contained in the international conventions - the Paris Convention, the Strasbourg Convention, the Rhine Convention - and to coordinate them with the Community's programme of action on the environment;
1. Believes that the time limits laid down for the application of the various limiting values are appropriate and approves the use of the qualified majority in Council deliberations on this subject;
 2. Hopes that Member States will forward to the Commission of the Communities the inventory of discharges into the aquatic environment of the Community not later than 31 December 1975;
 3. Hopes that Member States will extend their global approach on catchment basins to all other aquatic problems;
 4. Approves the proposal for a decision which has the merit of coordinating the provisions of the various conventions on the aquatic environment;
 5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the accompanying explanatory statement to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Due credit should be given to the Belgian government which, when signing the Paris Convention on marine pollution from land based sources made its country's agreement conditional on the prior coordination of the provisions and conventions on the aquatic environment. There is in fact a great risk that the various rules may be conflicting if not actually contradictory.

Apart from the Paris Convention, the main conventions are the Rhine Convention and the Convention on the protection of international waterways. These provisions must also be coordinated with the Community's programme of action on the environment.

For this reason the comparative table drawn up by the Commission on the definition of harmful substances and the degree of danger is particularly welcome. It prefigures a forthcoming Community decision, with a list of dangerous substances whose discharge into the aquatic environment of the Community would be supervised and regulated.

We believe it essential that overall Community rules be laid down to supplement the various conventions so as to remove possible conflicts of jurisdiction.

The Committee on Public Health and the Environment agrees in principle to the staggered time limits of eighteen to thirty months for the reduction of pollution, taking into account the degree of danger and the various limiting values. It welcomes in particular the proposal to fix these time limits by a qualified majority. This could be a test area for the application of this rule, with a view to its general adoption in more political fields.

Equally welcome and pressing is the drawing up of an inventory of present pollution of the Community's aquatic environment, and of the discharges made into it, but a time limit should be laid down for this inventory : 31 December 1975.

In conclusion, this proposal for a decision is welcomed, since it provides overall coordinated rules on the Community's aquatic environment, which is an essential prerequisite for the improvement which every European desires.





