



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 20 March 2000  
(OR. en)**

**5685/00**

**Interinstitutional File:  
96/0304 (COD)**

**LIMITE**

**ENV 22  
CODEC 68**

**LEGISLATIVE ACTS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS**

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Subject : Common Position adopted by the Council with a view to the adoption of a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

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**DIRECTIVE 2000/ / OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL**  
**of**

on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes  
on the environment

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 175(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission <sup>1</sup>,

Having regard to the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee <sup>2</sup>,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions <sup>3</sup>,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty <sup>4</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 129, 25.4.1997, p. 14 and OJ C 83, 25.3.1999, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 287, 22.9.1997, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 64, 27.2.1998, p. 63 and OJ C 374, 23.12.1999, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Opinion of the European Parliament of 20 October 1998 (OJ C 341, 9.11.1998, p. 18),  
Council Common Position of (not yet published in the Official Journal) and  
Decision of the European Parliament of (not yet published in the Official  
Journal).

Whereas:

- (1) Article 174 of the Treaty provides that Community policy on the environment is to contribute to, inter alia, the preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, the protection of human health and the prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources and that it is to be based on the precautionary principle. Article 6 of the Treaty provides that environmental protection requirements are to be integrated into the definition of Community policies and activities, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- (2) The fifth Environment Action Programme: Towards sustainability – A European Community programme of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development <sup>1</sup>, supplemented by Decision No 2179/98/EC <sup>2</sup> on its review, affirms the importance of assessing the likely environmental effects of plans and programmes.
- (3) Environmental assessment is an important tool for integrating environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment in the Member States, because it ensures that such effects of implementing plans and programmes are taken into account during their preparation and before their adoption.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 138, 17. 5.1993, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 275, 10.10.1998, p. 1.

- (4) The adoption of environmental assessment procedures at the planning and programming level should benefit undertakings by providing a more consistent framework in which to operate by the inclusion of the relevant environmental information into decision-making. The inclusion of a wider set of factors in decision-making should contribute to more sustainable and effective solutions.
- (5) The different environmental assessment systems operating within Member States should contain a set of common procedural requirements necessary to contribute to a high level of protection of the environment.
- (6) The systems operating within the Community for environmental assessment of plans and programmes should ensure that there are adequate transboundary consultations where the implementation of a plan or programme being prepared in one Member State is likely to have significant effects on the environment of another Member State.
- (7) Action is therefore required at Community level to lay down a minimum environmental assessment framework, which would set out the broad principles of the environmental assessment system and leave the details to the Member States, having regard to the principle of subsidiarity. Action by the Community should not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives set out in the Treaty.

- (8) This Directive is of a procedural nature, and its requirements should either be integrated into existing procedures in Member States or incorporated in specifically established procedures. With a view to avoiding duplication of the assessment, Member States should take account, where appropriate, of the fact that assessments will be carried out at different levels of a hierarchy of plans and programmes.
- (9) All plans and programmes which are prepared for a number of sectors and which set a framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment <sup>1</sup>, and all plans and programmes which have been determined to require assessment pursuant to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna <sup>2</sup>, are likely to have significant effects on the environment, and should as a rule be made subject to systematic environmental assessment. When they determine the use of small areas at local level or are minor modifications to the above plans or programmes, they should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- (10) Other plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects may not have significant effects on the environment in all cases and should be assessed only where Member States determine that they are likely to have such effects.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 175, 5.7.1985, p. 40. Directive as amended by Directive 97/11/EC (OJ L 73, 14.3.1997, p. 5).

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7. Directive as last amended by Directive 97/62/EC (OJ L 305, 8.11.1997, p. 42).

- (11) When Member States make such determinations, they should take into account the relevant criteria set out in this Directive.
- (12) Some plans or programmes are not subject to this Directive because of their particular characteristics.
- (13) Where an assessment is required by this Directive, an environmental report should be prepared containing relevant information as set out in this Directive, identifying, describing and evaluating the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme; Member States should communicate to the Commission any measures they take concerning the quality of environmental reports.
- (14) In order to contribute to more transparent decision-making and with the aim of ensuring that the information supplied for the assessment is comprehensive and reliable, it is necessary to provide that authorities with relevant environmental responsibilities and the public are to be consulted during the assessment of plans and programmes, and that appropriate time frames are set, allowing sufficient time for consultations, including the expression of opinion.
- (15) Where the implementation of a plan or programme prepared in one Member State is likely to have a significant effect on the environment of other Member States, provision should be made for the Member States concerned to enter into consultations and for the relevant authorities and the public to be informed and enabled to express their opinion.

- (16) The environmental report and the opinions expressed by the relevant authorities and the public, as well as the results of any transboundary consultation, should be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.
- (17) Member States should ensure that, when a plan or programme is adopted, the relevant authorities and the public are informed and relevant information is made available to them.
- (18) Where the obligation to carry out assessments of the effects on the environment arises simultaneously from this Directive and other Community legislation, such as Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds <sup>1</sup>, Directive 92/43/EEC, [or Directive ../...../EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy \*], in order to avoid duplication of the assessment, Member States may provide for coordinated or joint procedures fulfilling the requirements of the relevant Community legislation.
- (19) A first report on the application and effectiveness of this Directive should be carried out by the Commission five years after its entry into force, and at seven-year intervals thereafter. With a view to further integrating environmental protection requirements, and taking into account the experience acquired, the first report should, if appropriate, be accompanied by proposals for amendment of this Directive, in particular as regards the possibility of extending its scope to other areas/sectors and other types of plans and programmes,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 103, 25.4.1979, p. 1. Directive as last amended by Directive 97/49/EC (OJ L 223, 13.8.1997, p. 9).

\* to be inserted if that Directive is adopted before this one.

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

Article 1

Objectives

The objective of this Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Article 2

Definitions

For the purposes of this Directive:

- (a) "plans and programmes" shall mean plans and programmes, as well as their modifications
- which are subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and
  - which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions;



- (b) "environmental assessment" shall mean the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision in accordance with Articles 4 to 9;
- (c) "environmental report" shall mean the part of the plan or programme documentation containing the information required in Article 5 and Annex I;
- (d) "the public" shall mean natural or legal persons, and their associations, organisations or groups.

### Article 3

#### Scope

1. An environmental assessment, in accordance with Articles 4 to 9, shall be carried out for plans and programmes referred to in paragraphs 2 to 4 which are likely to have significant environmental effects.
2. Subject to paragraph 3, an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes,
  - (a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 85/337/EEC, or

(b) which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of Directive 92/43/EEC.

3. Plans and programmes referred to in paragraph 2 which determine the use of small areas at local level and minor modifications to plans and programmes referred to in paragraph 2 shall require an environmental assessment only where the Member States determine that they are likely to have significant environmental effects.

4. Member States shall determine whether plans and programmes, other than those referred to in paragraph 2, which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant environmental effects.

5. Member States shall determine whether plans or programmes referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 are likely to have significant environmental effects either through case-by-case examination or by specifying types of plans and programmes or by combining both approaches, and in all cases taking into account relevant criteria set out in Annex II.

6. In the case-by-case examination and in specifying types of plans and programmes in accordance with paragraph 5, the authorities referred to in Article 6(3) shall be consulted.

7. Member States shall ensure that their conclusions pursuant to paragraph 5 are made available to the public.

8. The following plans and programmes are not subject to this Directive:

- plans and programmes the sole purpose of which is to serve national defence or civil emergency,
- financial or budget plans and programmes,
- plans and programmes falling under the 2000-2006 programming period under Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/99 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds <sup>1</sup> or under the 2000-2006 and 2000-2007 programming periods under Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/99 of 17 May 1999 on support for rural development from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and amending and repealing certain regulations <sup>2</sup>.

#### Article 4

##### General obligations

1. The environmental assessment referred to in Article 3 shall be carried out during the preparation of a plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.
2. The requirements of this Directive shall either be integrated into existing procedures in Member States for the adoption of plans and programmes or incorporated in procedures established to comply with this Directive.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 161, 26.6.1999, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 160, 26.6.1999, p. 80.

3. Where plans and programmes form part of a hierarchy, Member States shall, with a view to avoiding duplication of the assessment, take into account the fact that the assessment will be carried out, in accordance with this Directive, at different levels of the hierarchy.

## Article 5

### Environmental report

1. Where an environmental assessment is required under Article 3(1), an environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given for this purpose is referred to in Annex I.
2. The environmental report prepared pursuant to paragraph 1 shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment.
3. Relevant information available on environmental effects of the plans and programmes and obtained at other levels of decision-making or through other Community legislation may be used for providing the information referred to in Annex I.
4. The authorities referred to in Article 6(3) shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report.

## Article 6

### Consultations

1. The draft plan or programme and the environmental report prepared in accordance with Article 5 shall be made available to the authorities referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article and the public.
2. The authorities referred to in paragraph 3 and the public referred to in paragraph 4 shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure.
3. Member States shall designate the authorities to be consulted which, by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes.
4. Member States shall identify the public for the purposes of paragraph 2, including relevant non-governmental organisations, such as those promoting environmental protection and other organisations concerned.
5. The detailed arrangements for the information and consultation of the authorities and the public shall be determined by the Member States.

## Article 7

### Transboundary consultations

1. Where a Member State considers that the implementation of a plan or programme being prepared in relation to its territory is likely to have significant effects on the environment in another Member State, or where a Member State likely to be significantly affected so requests, the Member State in whose territory the plan or programme is being prepared shall, before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure, forward a copy of the draft plan or programme and the relevant environmental report to the other Member State.
2. Where a Member State is sent a copy of a draft plan or programme and an environmental report under paragraph 1, it shall indicate to the other Member State whether it wishes to enter into consultations before the adoption of the plan or programme or its submission to the legislative procedure and, if it so indicates, the Member States concerned shall enter into consultations concerning the likely transboundary environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme and the measures envisaged to reduce or eliminate such effects.

Where such consultations take place, the Member States concerned shall agree on detailed arrangements to ensure that the authorities referred to in Article 6(3) and the public referred to in Article 6(4) in the Member State likely to be significantly affected are informed and given an opportunity to forward their opinion within a reasonable time-frame.

3. Where Member States are required under this Article to enter into consultations, they shall agree, at the beginning of such consultations, on a reasonable time-frame for the duration of the consultations.

## Article 8

### Decision making

The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.

## Article 9

### Information on the decision

1. Member States shall ensure that, when a plan or programme is adopted, the authorities referred to in Article 6(3), the public and any Member State consulted under Article 7 are informed and the following items are made available to those so informed:
  - (a) the plan or programme as adopted, and
  - (b) a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 have been taken into account in accordance with Article 8 and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.

2. The detailed arrangements concerning the information referred to in paragraph 1 shall be determined by the Member States.

#### Article 10

##### Relationship with other Community legislation

1. An environmental assessment carried out under this Directive shall be without prejudice to any requirements under Directive 85/337/EEC and to any other Community law requirements.
2. For plans and programmes for which the obligation to carry out assessments of the effects on the environment arises simultaneously from this Directive and other Community legislation, Member States may provide for coordinated or joint procedures fulfilling the requirements of the relevant Community legislation in order inter alia to avoid duplication of assessment.

#### Article 11

##### Information, reporting and review

1. Member States and the Commission shall exchange information on the experience gained in applying this Directive.



2. Member States shall communicate to the Commission any measures they take concerning the quality of environmental reports.

3. Before <sup>\*</sup> the Commission shall send a first report on the application and effectiveness of this Directive to the European Parliament and to the Council.

With a view further to integrating environmental protection requirements, in accordance with Article 6 of the Treaty, and taking into account the experience acquired in the application of this Directive in the Member States, such a report will be accompanied by proposals for amendment of this Directive, if appropriate. In particular, the Commission will consider the possibility of extending the scope of this Directive to other areas/sectors and other types of plans and programmes.

A new evaluation report shall follow at seven-year intervals.

4. The Commission shall report on the relationship between this Directive and Regulations (EC) No 1260/99 and No 1257/99 well ahead of the expiry of the programming periods provided for in those Regulations.

## Article 12

### Implementation of the Directive

1. Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive before <sup>\*\*</sup>. They shall forthwith inform the Commission thereof.

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\* Five years after the entry into force of this Directive.

\*\* Three years after the entry into force of this Directive.

2. When Member States adopt the measures, they shall contain a reference to this Directive or shall be accompanied by such reference on the occasion of their official publication. The methods of making such reference shall be laid down by Member States.
3. The obligation referred to in Article 4(1) shall apply only to the plans and programmes of which the first formal preparatory act is subsequent to the date referred to in paragraph 1.
4. Before <sup>\*</sup>, Member States shall communicate to the Commission, in addition to the measures referred to in paragraph 1, separate information on the types of plans and programmes which, in accordance with Article 3, would be subject to an environmental assessment pursuant to this Directive. The Commission shall make this information available to the Member States. The information will be updated on a regular basis.

### Article 13

#### Entry into force

This Directive shall enter into force on the day of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

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\* Three years after the entry into force of this Directive.

Article 14

Addressees

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament

The President

For the Council

The President

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Information referred to in Article 5(1)

The information to be provided under Article 5(1), subject to Article 5(2) and (3), is the following:

- (a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;
- (b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;
- (c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
- (d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
- (e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
- (f) the likely significant effects \* on the environment;

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\* these effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

- (g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;
  - (h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;
  - (i) a description of measures envisaged for monitoring the implementation of the plan or programme;
  - (j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.
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Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5)

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to
  - the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
  - the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
  - the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
  - environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;
  - the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to
- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
  - the cumulative nature of the effects;
  - the transboundary nature of the effects;
  - the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
  - the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
  - the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
    - = special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
    - = exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;
    - = intensive land-use;
  - the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.
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