
Enlarging the Environment

Newsletter from the European Commission DG XI on environment and enlargement

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Enlarging the environment of the European Union - focusing the efforts for approximation on the key issues

by Ritt Bjerregaard
European Commissioner for the Environment

Negotiations on the accession of new Member States from central and eastern Europe will start a little over one year from now, and it is therefore high time to 'get our act together' - in the Union itself and in the associated countries candidating for membership. This year I have visited five of the associated countries and in the first half of 1997 I will visit the remaining five. In all of my meetings with the leaders from the associated countries, I have emphasized that environment is going to be an important - and difficult - issue in the overall process of approximation.

This newsletter will give brief reports on new developments in EU environmental law and policy and on developments in the approximation process in relation to the environment in the ten associated countries. The newsletter is addressed to authorities involved in the environmental approximation process, but also to NGOs and other interested parties in the associated countries. The newsletter will be available both in a printed version and on Internet. In parallel we have established a telephone help-line service which can provide you with more information on particular issues.

It would be a misunderstanding to see the environmental dimension of the enlargement process only as one which just will add to the already long list of problems which have to be overcome by the newcomers to the Union. Environmental protection also entails a considerable potential for positive 'spin offs' for the economies in transition in terms of increased industrial efficiency and competitiveness. In the approximation process, the most pressing priority is the setting of priorities in realistic and costed programmes for implementation. Environmental approximation is not just a question of getting the necessary pieces of legislation in place. Together we have to assess what concrete actions and decisions are needed in terms of environmental policies, time and money to secure the smoothest possible compliance with the environmental requirements of the European Union.

DG XI in the Commission is about to establish a database, the purpose of which is to assess the progress in the approximation process. It is our intention to develop key indicators for the development in environmental approximation. We hope that we can present a first survey based on these indicators in one of the forthcoming issues of the newsletter.

Enlarging the European Union must go hand in hand with enlarging and improving environmental protection for a still greater number of people. But what is most required in the approximation process is concentration and focus on the key issues and priorities.

I hope that this little newsletter can be of assistance in this process

- New EU Environmental Law and Policy -

This survey covers environmental legislation adopted by Council and the European Parliament and new proposals for legislation and communications adopted by the European Commission this year. The survey also includes the proposals for new environmental legislation and Communications which the European Commission is foreseen to adopt in 1997. Please note that proposals for legislation adopted by the Commission before 1 January 1996, but not yet finally adopted by Council, are not included in this survey. Decisions from the Commission or from Council and the European Parliament are only exceptionally included.

Each item is listed under its official title, date of adoption and reference number in the Official Journal or COM reference, sometimes followed by a commonly used "pet name" or acronym in parentheses. The brief descriptions of the key purpose or content are meant as a first orientation of the reader only. For reference, please consult the full official text, available through the Help Line Service.

1. Adopted legislation 1996

Environmental legislation adopted by Council and the European Parliament in 1996:

Council Directive 96/29/Euratom of 13 May 1996 laying down basic safety standards for the protection of health of workers and the general public against the dangers arising from ionizing radiation OJL (96) 159/1

Revision and update of basic safety standards for the protection of health of workers and the general public against the dangers arising from ionizing radiation, last revised in 1984. The Directive applies to all practices which involve a risk from ionizing radiation.

Council Regulation (EC) No 1404/96 of 15 July 1996 amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92 establishing a financial instrument for the environment ("Life") OJL (96) 181/1

Changes the status of Central and Eastern European Countries in respect to the Life Programme as they shall now meet the costs involved in their participation themselves.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1492/96 of 26 July 1996 amending Annex II and III to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2455/92 concerning the export and import of certain dangerous chemicals. OJL (96) 189/19

Sets up an EU system of notification and information for export to third countries of chemicals banned or severely restricted in the EU, implements the international Prior Informed Consent procedure (PIC) in relation to certain chemical substances, and ensures that dangerous chemicals are labelled, packaged and classified for export within the EU.

Commission Directive 96/54/EC of 30 July 1996 adapting to technical progress for the twenty-second time Council Directive 67/548/EEC on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances OJL (96) 248/1

Introduces a new system of classification and labelling of dangerous chemicals including adding new chemicals to the list in Annex 1 of Directive 67/548, adding new test methods to Annex 5 of that directive, and introduces a new risk-phrase to the labelling of these chemicals.

Council Directive 96/59/EC of 16 September 1996 on the disposal of polychlorinated biphenyls and polychlorinated terphenyls (PCB/PCT) OJL (96) 243/31

Prohibits discharging, discarding and unsupervised dumping of PCBs and PCTs. Makes the harmless disposal of used PCBs compulsory. Provides a system of authorisations for firms responsible for the disposal of PCBs.

Council Directive 96/61/EC of 24 September 1996 on Integrated pollution prevention and control ("IPPC-Directive") OJL (96) 257/26

Establishing the framework for integrated control of emissions in the air, water and land from certain industrial activities by way of a permitting system based on the use of best available techniques(BAT).

Council Directive 96/62/EC of 27 September 1996 on Ambient Air Quality Assessment and Management ("Air Quality Framework Directive") OJL (96) 296/55

Framework legislation defining the basic principles of a common strategy designed to set objectives for ambient air quality, to ensure uniform assessment of air quality and to keep the public informed. New substance specific limit values will be laid down in daughter or implementing directives under this framework (see below under section 4).

Directive 96/69/EC of the European Parliament and Council of 8 October 1996 amending Directive 70/220/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to measures to be taken against air pollution by emissions from motor vehicles OJL (96) 282/64

Aligns the emission requirements for light commercial vehicles with the 1996-level of emissions requirements for passenger cars.

Council Directive of 9 December 1996 on Control of Major-Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances ("Seveso Directive") Builds on the principles in the existing Council Directive 82/501/EEC, but develops and strengthens a number of key areas including land-use planning, safety management systems, freedom of access to information and participation by the public.

2. Proposals for legislation 1996: Proposals for environmental legislation adopted by the European Commission in 1996:

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision on Review of the Fifth Action Programme (adopted 11 May 1996) OJL (96) 140

In the proposal for Review of the 5th Action Programme from 1992, five priority areas are identified including improved integration of the environment into other policies, use of a wider range of policy instruments, increased implementation and enforcement measures, raising public awareness and reinforcement of the Union's role in international action. (A political agreement on a Common Position was reached by the Council on 10 December 1996).

Communication on future strategy for the control of atmospheric emissions from road transport taking into account results from the

Auto-Oil programme - (1) Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive relating to the quality of petrol and diesel fuels and amending Council Directive 93/12/EEC, (2) Proposal for European Parliament and Council Directive relating to measures to be taken against air pollution by emissions from motor vehicles and amending Council Directives 70/156/EEC and 70/220/EEC (adopted 18/06/96) COM (96) 248

Proposal to reduce emissions from road transport significantly by 2010 through improved vehicle technology, improved fuel quality, better vehicle maintenance and annual inspection tests, and local initiatives such as public transport investment and restricted access to city centres.

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision on an action programme for integrated Groundwater Protection and Management (adopted 10/07/96) COM (96) 315

Proposal for Member States to draw up national groundwater quantity and quality management programmes by the year 2000 including identification of pollution sources, mapping of groundwater resources, designation of zones where groundwater is particularly sensitive, and increased monitoring.

Proposal for a Council Directive on the limitation of emissions of volatile organic compounds in certain processes and industrial installations (adopted 6/11/96) COM (96) 538

Proposal to reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds, VOCs, to the atmosphere from industries using solvents. The proposal would require Member States to implement a set of emission limit values which affected industries must achieve, or may implement a national plan which will achieve the same goal.

Proposal for a Directive on Strategic Environmental Planning (adopted 04/12/96) COM (96) 511

Proposal to strengthen the existing environmental assessment system of certain projects by extending it to the wider land use planning system in areas such as energy, waste, mineral extraction and transport, and to take the results of such assessment into account at an earlier stage in the planning process

Proposal for revision of the Eco-label Regulation (EEC) 92/880 (adopted on 10/12/96)

Proposal for a thorough revision of the

existing Eco-label Regulation. The criteria for awarding an eco-label will be determined by the European Eco-labelling Organisation, and a ceiling will be introduced for fees paid for using the label.

3. Policy documents 1996

Communications and other policy documents adopted by the European Commission in 1996:

Communication on European Community Water Policy (adopted on 21/02/96) COM (96) 59

Outlines a strategy on how to streamline Community water policy and legislation through designation of water management objectives, monitoring of quality and quantity of water, and public consultations.

Communication on the review of the Community Strategy for Waste Management (adopted 30/07/96) COM (96) 399

Establishes general principles for waste management. Reaffirms the hierarchy of waste management objectives and introduces the principle of producer responsibility for waste management, promotes clean technologies and economic incentives for cutting down on waste.

Communication on implementing of Community environmental law (adopted 23/10/96) COM (96) 500

Discusses how to improve implementation of EU environmental legislation in Member States. Suggests to complement the use of infringement proceeding against Member States by establishing minimum guidelines for environmental inspectorates at national level, to strengthen the handling of complaints and investigation procedures at national level, and to ensure that representative organisations are guaranteed access to national courts.

Future noise policy - European Commission Green Paper (adopted 5/11/96) COM (96) 540

Sets out a strategy for a noise abatement programme based on shared responsibility between the Community and Member States on target setting, monitoring and data collection.

Communication on a Strategy Paper for Reducing Methane Emissions (adopted 15/11/96) COM (96) 557

A discussion of strategies to reduce farm-generated methane by creating manure lagoons with methane collection facilities, and to reduce waste-generated methane by introducing rules to cut organic waste production and to equip dumps with flare-off or collection systems.

Communication on Environmental Agreements (adopted 27/11/96) COM (96) 561

Discusses the establishment of a framework for voluntary legally binding agreements between public authorities and industry for the purpose of environmental

protection.

4. Proposals in the pipeline for 1997

Proposal for a Directive on the landfill of waste.

Proposes a number of safeguards for both existing and new landfills. Provisions for controlling the opening, management, closure and monitoring of landfill sites and for acceptability of waste in landfills. Specific measures for different types of waste.

Proposal for a Directive on End-of-life vehicles

To ensure that end-of-life vehicles do not cause environmental problems by requiring a certificate of destruction before a vehicle is de-registered and by setting recycling targets.

Proposal for a Directive on environmental control of installations not covered by the IPPC Directive

To extend the principle of integrated pollution control, introduced in the IPPC-Directive mentioned above, to cover a wider group of installations, including Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.

Proposal for a Directive on the reduction of sulphur content in liquid fuels

Forming part of the acidification strategy, the proposal will reduce sulphur content in heavy fuel oils used in large combustion plants and domestic gas oils.

Proposal for a review of the Directive 88/609/EEC on Large Combustion Plants

Aims at bringing the existing directive in line with the strategy to combat acidification in European countries (see below) by reducing emissions of SO₂ and NO_x from large combustion plants.

Proposals for Implementation Directives on air quality under Directive 96/62/EC on Ambient Air Quality Assessment and Management

Will lay down limit values for NO_x, SO_x, Particulate Matter and Lead (Pb).

Proposal for a revision of Directive 90/220/EEC on deliberate release of genetically modified organisms



With the purpose to streamline

procedures, set up risk categories where possible and to improve information of the public through labelling in particular in respect to foodstuffs.

5. Policy in the pipeline for 1997

Communication on the use of "green" levies and charges

Clarifies the legal scope and framework under Community law for introducing different forms of environmental taxes within the Internal market

Communication on a strategy to combat acidification in the European Countries

A strategy to combat acidification by reducing emissions of SO₂, NO_x and NA₃ across the EU with the objective to achieve no-exceedence of 'critical load' levels. In view of the transboundary nature of the acidification problem there is an interest in involving non-EU-countries in the development and implementation of the strategy.

Communication on environmental business and industry, job creation, greening of industry

Clarifies the actual and potential role of eco-business in a step-by-step strategy for transition to cleaner production and consumption patterns.

Communication on the Community biodiversity strategy

Strategy for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity by integrating biodiversity concerns into relevant Community sector- and cross-sector policies.

Communication: Progress report on approximation of environment and radiation protection legislation in CEECs

The 1997-progress report is foreseen to be the first of a series of annual reports assessing progress in the environmental approximation process in the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Approximation Agenda

Round-up of meetings of interest for those involved in environmental approximation between now and March 1997:

23-24 January 1997	Climate Change and Environmental Policy: a Challenge for Energy Conservation" conference organised by the Dutch Presidency in cooperation with the European Commission to prepare for the Environment Council of 3-4 March. Main topic to be discussed: climate change, especially energy conservation potential within industry and households. Participants: representatives of ministries of environment and energy from EU countries and CEECs, representatives of the European Commission. Venue: Amsterdam.
Mid February 1997	EU Senior Officials' Mission to Slovenia on the approximation of environmental legislation
24 February 1997	Joint Task Force/PPC (Project Preparation Committee) session. Participants: donor countries and international financing institutions. Venue: Regional Environmental Center (REC) for central and eastern Europe, Szentendre, Hungary.
25-26 February 1997	EAP (Environmental Action Programme) Task Force meeting. Participants: representatives of environmental ministries in CEECs and NIS (Newly Independent States). Venue: Regional Environmental Center (REC) for central and eastern Europe, Szentendre, Hungary.
3 March 1997	Joint EU-CEEC Environment Ministers Meeting under the Dutch Presidency. Third meeting. Venue: Brussels.
11-13 March 1997	18th Meeting of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM). Annual meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea. Venue: Helsinki

The DG XI Newsletter: Enlarging the Environment and new Help Line service

The newsletter "Enlarging the Environment" will be published bi-monthly by the European Commission DG XI. The newsletter is also accessible on Internet. "Enlarging the Environment" is primarily meant as a tool for authorities and decision makers involved in the environmental approximation process in central and eastern Europe. It will give brief updates on new developments in EU environmental law and policy. If you wish to respond to articles or suggest topics you would like to see covered in future issues we have an e-mail address: enlargement@dg11.cec.be.

The Internet version of "Enlarging the Environment" can be accessed by way of DG XI's Home Page, which you will find on <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg11/dg11home.html>, and then select "Enlargement Newsletter".

A special telephone Help Line has been set up in DG XI in order to facilitate easy access to information on EU environmental policy and legislation, for those authorities in central and eastern Europe involved in the environmental approximation process. The Help Line service will ensure that you get an answer to your questions on EU environmental legislation and policy issues, normally within 24 hours. The Help Line will also be able to provide you with official Commission documents. It is not, however, foreseen that the service will provide specific technical assistance or advice.

Who is who ?

The Enlargement Team in DG XI

The unit in DG XI directly dealing with environmental approximation in relation to the associated countries in central and eastern Europe is unit XI.A.5. **Timo Mäkelä** is Head of Unit and his secretary is **Joëlle Moraitis**. The unit works in three teams: (1) the sector for environmental cooperation with central and eastern Europe headed by **Philippe Bourel de la Roncière**, (2) the enlargement team, and (3) a smaller team dealing with Mediterranean programmes.

The members of the enlargement team are

Ian Clark: coordinator for the team and desk officer for Hungary and Slovak Republic

Claudia Canevari: desk officer for Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia.

Christophe Manet: desk officer for Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

Margareta Stubenrauch: desk officer for Czech Republic

Jesper Jørgensen: in charge of monitoring environmental approximation and coordinator for the Help Line and Newsletter.

Christine Haffner: in charge of the Help Line

Kate Schwab: secretary for the team and in charge of production of the Newsletter.

At the beginning of 1997 the enlargement team will be enlarged with two new members:

Anna Bramwell will be in charge of the annual status reports on environmental approximation.

Bo Caperman will be responsible for budgetary and administrative matters.

Please Note :

Unless otherwise indicated the views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policies or opinions of the European Commission. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of any information given, we cannot accept responsibility for any errors it may contain and would strongly advise checking any data contained herein before official use. For further copies contact: Enlarging the Environment, the newsletter from the European Commission DG XI on environment and enlargement.. Rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium n Office TRMF 05/54 n Tel: +322.296.87.46 n Fax: +322.299.41.23 n e-mail: enlargement@dg11.cec.be Internet: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg11/dg11home.html> and then select "Enlargement Newsletter"

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- What's new from DG XI -