

## FOREWORD

Each year the Commission receives an increasing number of complaints alleging that Member States have implemented or applied Community environmental law incorrectly. This trend clearly reflects the growing concern of European citizens about the state of the environment and the way in which Member States are complying with Community environmental law. It also highlights that these issues cannot always be solved by the existing structures and mechanisms in the Member States.

Since I first became Environment Commissioner, I have consistently stressed the importance of full compliance by the Member States with Community environmental law. The Sixth Environment Action Programme<sup>1</sup> clearly states that the full application, enforcement and implementation of all existing Community environmental legislation is a strategic priority for the European Union. Effective and efficient environmental legislation is essential in order to achieve a high level of environmental protection. Equally essential is the need to systematically monitor compliance with the legislation, as well as to inform the public about the compliance record of each Member State.

This is why I welcome in particular this third Annual Survey, which covers the period 2000/2001. It follows on from the first Annual Survey (1996/1997)<sup>2</sup> and the second Annual Survey (1998/1999)<sup>3</sup>, by providing up-to-date information on the state of application of Community environmental law. This is in response to the Commission Communication on implementing Community environmental law<sup>4</sup> and the Resolutions of the Council<sup>5</sup> and European Parliament.

I hope that the publication of this survey will provide Member States with an invaluable source of information and that it will make them even more committed than they already are to seeing the full, timely and correct implementation of Community environmental law.

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Member of the Commission

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2001)31 final, 24.1.2001.

<sup>2</sup> SEC(1999) 592, 27.4.1999.

<sup>3</sup> SEC(2000) 1219, 13.7.2000.

<sup>4</sup> COM(96) 500 final, 22.10.1996.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 321, 22.10.1997, p. 1.