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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 17.7.2008
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2006/0129 (COD)

COMMISSION OPINION

pursuant to Article 251(2), third subparagraph, point (c) of the EC Treaty, concerning the 2nd Reading of the European Parliament with a view to the adoption of a Proposal for a

DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy and amending Directives 82/176/EEC, 83/513/EEC, 84/156/EEC, 84/491/EEC, 86/280/EEC and 2000/60/EC

AMENDING THE PROPOSAL OF THE COMMISSION pursuant to Article 250 (2) of the EC Treaty

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(Text with EEA relevance)

1. BACKGROUND

Procedure

On 17 June 2006 the Commission submitted a Proposal for a Directive on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy to the European Parliament and of the Council for adoption by co-decision procedure as laid down in Article 251 of the EC Treaty.

The European Economic and Social Committee delivered its opinion on 15 February 2007.

The European Parliament adopted its position in first reading on 22 May 2007.

The Council adopted its Common Position on 20 December 2007.

The European Parliament adopted its position in second reading on 17 June 2008.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL

The Commission proposal for a Directive on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy ("Directive on Priority Substances") is a "daughter directive" of the Water Framework Directive – WFD (2000/60/EC¹). The purpose of this proposal is to:

- settle environmental quality standards for 33 priority and priority hazardous substances (based on Article 16 (7) of the WFD),
- repeal 5 old Directives (as a result of the review required by Article 16 (10) of the WFD) and
- review the list of priority hazardous substances (based on Decision 2455/2001/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council²).

3. COMMISSION COMMENTS

3.1 General

At its Plenary Session of 17 June 2008, the European Parliament adopted a compromise package consisting of 18 amendments (numbered from 41 to 58) which had been agreed with the Council in view of reaching a second reading agreement.

¹ OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1–73

² OJ L 331, 15.12.2001, p. 1–5

These amendments concern mainly the following:

- Addition of reporting obligations regarding measures taken with a view to reducing the extent of mixing zones.
- The inclusion of sediment and biota in the inventories of emissions, discharges and losses.
- The development of technical guidelines through comitology for mixing zones and inventories.
- An article on reporting and review.
- An article on the future review of Annex X of the WFD.
- Amendments to a number of recitals.

The Commission accepts all these amendments as they are in line with the overall purpose and the general characteristics of the Proposal.

3.2 Amended Proposal

Pursuant to Article 250(2) of the EC Treaty, the Commission amends its Proposal as set out above.