

Directive 2006/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 February 2006 concerning the management of bathing water quality and repealing Directive 76/160/EEC

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PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 15 February 2006

concerning the management of bathing water
quality and repealing Directive 76/160/EEC

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⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee⁽²⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions⁽³⁾,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty⁽⁴⁾, in the light of the joint text approved by the Conciliation Committee on 8 December 2005,

Whereas:

- (1) Building on the Commission's Communication on sustainable development, the European Council has singled out objectives as general guidance for future development in priority areas such as natural resources and public health.
- (2) Water is a scarce natural resource, the quality of which should be protected, defended, managed and treated as such. Surface waters in particular are renewable resources with a limited capacity to recover from adverse impacts from human activities.
- (3) Community policy on the environment should aim at a high level of protection, and contribute to pursuing the objectives of preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment and of protecting human health.
- (4) In December 2000, the Commission adopted a Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the development of a new bathing water policy and initiated a large-scale consultation of all interested and involved parties. The main outcome of this consultation was general support for the development of a new Directive based on the latest scientific evidence and paying particular attention to wider public participation.
- (5) Decision No 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 July 2002 laying down the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme⁽⁵⁾ contains a commitment to ensuring a high level of protection of bathing water, including by

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revising Council Directive 76/160/EEC of 8 December 1975 concerning the quality of bathing water⁽⁶⁾.

- (6) Pursuant to the Treaty, in preparing policy on the environment the Community is, *inter alia*, to take account of available scientific and technical data. This Directive should use scientific evidence in implementing the most reliable indicator parameters for predicting microbiological health risk and to achieve a high level of protection. Further epidemiological studies should be undertaken urgently concerning the health risks associated with bathing, particularly in fresh water.
- (7) In order to increase efficiency and wise use of resources, this Directive needs to be closely coordinated with other Community legislation on water, such as Council Directives 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment⁽⁷⁾, 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources⁽⁸⁾ and Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy⁽⁹⁾.
- (8) Appropriate information on planned measures and progress on implementation should be disseminated to stakeholders. The public should receive appropriate and timely information on the results of the monitoring of bathing water quality and risk management measures in order to prevent health hazards, especially in the context of predictable short-term pollution or abnormal situations. New technology that allows the public to be informed in an efficient and comparable way on bathing waters across the Community should be applied.
- (9) For the purpose of monitoring, harmonised methods and practices of analysis need to be applied. Observation and quality assessment over an extended period are necessary in order to achieve a realistic bathing water classification.
- (10) Compliance should be a matter of appropriate management measures and quality assurance, not merely of measuring and calculation. A system of bathing water profiles is therefore appropriate to provide a better understanding of risks as a basis for management measures. In parallel, particular attention should be attached to adherence to quality standards and coherent transition from Directive 76/160/EEC.
- (11) On 17 February 2005 the Community ratified the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Århus Convention). It is therefore appropriate for this Directive to include provisions on public access to information and to provide for public participation in its implementation to supplement Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information⁽¹⁰⁾ and Directive 2003/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 providing for public participation in respect of the drawing up of certain plans and programmes relating to the environment⁽¹¹⁾.
- (12) Since the objectives of this Directive, namely the attainment by the Member States, on the basis of common standards, of a good bathing water quality and a high level of protection throughout the Community, cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member

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States and can be better achieved at Community level, the Community may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Directive does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve those objectives.

- (13) The measures necessary for the implementation of this Directive should be adopted in accordance with Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission⁽¹²⁾.
- (14) The continued importance of a Community bathing water policy is evident each bathing season as it protects the public from accidental and chronic pollution discharged in or near Community bathing areas. The overall quality of bathing waters has improved considerably since Directive 76/160/EEC came into force. However, that Directive reflects the state of knowledge and experience of the early 1970. Patterns of bathing water use have since changed, as has the state of scientific and technical knowledge. Therefore, that Directive should be repealed,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

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- (1) [OJ C 45 E, 25.2.2003, p. 127.](#)
- (2) [OJ C 220, 16.9.2003, p. 39.](#)
- (3) [OJ C 244, 10.10.2003, p. 31.](#)
- (4) Opinion of the European Parliament of 21 October 2003 ([OJ C 82 E, 1.4.2004, p. 115](#)). Council Common Position of 20 December 2004 ([OJ C 111 E, 11.5.2005, p. 1](#)) and Position of the European Parliament of 10 May 2005 (not yet published in the Official Journal). European Parliament Legislative Resolution of 18 January 2006 (not yet published in the Official Journal) and Council Decision of 20 December 2005.
- (5) [OJ L 242, 10.9.2002, p. 1.](#)
- (6) [OJ L 31, 5.2.1976, p. 1.](#) Directive as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 807/2003 ([OJ L 122, 16.5.2003, p. 36](#)).
- (7) [OJ L 135, 30.5.1991, p. 40.](#) Directive as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 1882/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([OJ L 284, 31.10.2003, p. 1](#)).
- (8) [OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1.](#) Directive as amended by Regulation (EC) No 1882/2003.
- (9) [OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.](#) Directive as amended by Decision No 2455/2001/EC ([OJ L 331, 15.12.2001, p. 1](#)).
- (10) [OJ L 41, 14.2.2003, p. 26.](#)
- (11) [OJ L 156, 25.6.2003, p. 17.](#)
- (12) [OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23.](#)