

Council Directive of 12 June 1986 on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture (86/278/EEC)

Article 1

The purpose of this Directive is to regulate the use of sewage sludge in agriculture in such a way as to prevent harmful effects on soil, vegetation, animals and man, thereby encouraging the correct use of such sewage sludge.

Article 2

For the purposes of this Directive:

- (a) 'sludge' means:
- (i) residual sludge from sewage plants treating domestic or urban waste waters and from other sewage plants treating waste waters of a composition similar to domestic and urban waste waters;
 - (ii) residual sludge from septic tanks and other similar installations for the treatment of sewage;
 - (iii) residual sludge from sewage plants other than those referred to in (i) and (ii);
- (b) 'treated sludge' means:
- sludge which has undergone biological, chemical or heat treatment, long-term storage or any other appropriate process so as significantly to reduce its fermentability and the health hazards resulting from its use;
- (c) 'agriculture' means:
- the growing of all types of commercial food crops, including for stock-rearing purposes;
- (d) 'use' means:
- the spreading of sludge on the soil or any other application of sludge on and in the soil.

Article 3

1 The sludge referred to in Article 2 (a) (i) may only be used in agriculture in accordance with this Directive.

2 Without prejudice to Directives 75/442/EEC and 78/319/EEC:

- the sludge referred to in Article 2 (a) (ii) may be used in agriculture subject to any conditions that the Member State concerned may deem necessary for the protection of human health and the environment,
- the sludge referred to in Article 2 (a) (iii) may be used in agriculture only if its use is regulated by the Member State concerned.

Article 4

Values for concentrations of heavy metals in soil to which sludge is applied, concentrations of heavy metals in sludge and the maximum annual quantities of such heavy metals which may be introduced into soil intended for agriculture are given in Annexes I A, I B and I C.

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Article 5

Without prejudice to Article 12:

1. Member States shall prohibit the use of sludge where the concentration of one or more heavy metals in the soil exceeds the limit values which they lay down in accordance with Annex I A and shall take the necessary steps to ensure that those limit values are not exceeded as a result of the use of sludge.
2. Member States shall regulate the use of sludge in such a way that the accumulation of heavy metals in the soil does not lead to the limit values referred to in paragraph 1 being exceeded. To achieve this, they shall apply one or other of the procedures provided for in (a) and (b) below:
 - (a) Member States shall lay down the maximum quantities of sludge expressed in tonnes of dry matter which may be applied to the soil per unit of area per year while observing the limit values for heavy metal concentration in sludge which they lay down in accordance with Annex I B; or
 - (b) Member States shall ensure observance of the limit values for the quantities of metals introduced into the soil per unit of area and unit of time as set out in Annex I C.

Article 6

Without prejudice to Article 7:

- (a) sludge shall be treated before being used in agriculture. Member States may nevertheless authorize, under conditions to be laid down by them, the use of untreated sludge if it is injected or worked into the soil;
- (b) sewage-sludge producers shall regularly provide users with all the information referred to in Annex II A.

Article 7

Member States shall prohibit the use of sludge or the supply of sludge for use on:

- (a) grassland or forage crops if the grassland is to be grazed or the forage crops to be harvested before a certain period has elapsed. This period, which shall be set by the Member States taking particular account of their geographical and climatic situation, shall under no circumstances be less than three weeks;
- (b) soil in which fruit and vegetable crops are growing, with the exception of fruit trees;
- (c) ground intended for the cultivation of fruit and vegetable crops which are normally in direct contact with the soil and normally eaten raw, for a period of 10 months preceding the harvest of the crops and during the harvest itself.

Article 8

The following rules shall be observed when using sludge:

- the sludge shall be used in such a way that account is taken of the nutrient needs of the plants and that the quality of the soil and of the surface and ground water is not impaired,
- where sludge is used on soils of which the pH is below 6, Member States shall take into account the increased mobility and availability to the crop of heavy metals and shall, if necessary, reduce the limit values they have laid down in accordance with Annex I A.

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Article 9

Sludge and soil on which it is used shall be analyzed as outlined in Annexes II A and II B. The reference methods for sampling and analysis are indicated in Annex II C.

Article 10

- 1 Member States shall ensure that up-to-date records are kept, which register:
 - a the quantities of sludge produced and the quantities supplied for use in agriculture;
 - b the composition and properties of the sludge in relation to the parameters referred to in Annex II A;
 - c the type of treatment carried out, as defined in Article 2 (b);
 - d the names and addresses of the recipients of the sludge and the place where the sludge is to be used.
- 2 The records shall be available to the competent authorities and shall provide a basis for the consolidated report referred to in Article 17.
- 3 Information on the methods of treatment and the results of the analyses shall be released upon request to the competent authorities.

Article 11

Member States may exempt from Article 6 (b) and Article 10 (1) (b), (c) and (d) and paragraph 2, sludge from sewage treatment plants with a treatment capacity below 300 kg BOD₅ per day, corresponding to 5 000 person equivalents, which are designed primarily for the treatment of domestic waste water.

Article 12

Where conditions so demand, Member States may take more stringent measures than those provided for in this Directive.

Any decision of this nature shall be communicated to the Commission in accordance with existing agreements.

^{F1}Article 13

The Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 15a to amend the Annexes in order to adapt them to technical and scientific progress.

The first paragraph shall not apply to the parameters and values listed in Annexes I A, I B and I C, any factors likely to affect the evaluation of those values, and the parameters for analysis referred to in Annexes II A and II B.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by [Decision \(EU\) 2018/853 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Regulation \(EU\) No 1257/2013 and Directives 94/63/EC and 2009/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directives 86/278/EEC and 87/217/EEC as regards procedural rules in the field of environmental reporting and repealing Council Directive 91/692/EEC.](#)

^{F2}Article 14

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Textual Amendments

- F2** Deleted by [Decision \(EU\) 2018/853 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Regulation \(EU\) No 1257/2013 and Directives 94/63/EC and 2009/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directives 86/278/EEC and 87/217/EEC as regards procedural rules in the field of environmental reporting and repealing Council Directive 91/692/EEC.](#)

[^{F1}Article 15

1 The Commission shall be assisted by the committee established by Article 39 of Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁾. That committee shall be a committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽²⁾.

2 Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by [Decision \(EU\) 2018/853 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Regulation \(EU\) No 1257/2013 and Directives 94/63/EC and 2009/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directives 86/278/EEC and 87/217/EEC as regards procedural rules in the field of environmental reporting and repealing Council Directive 91/692/EEC.](#)

[^{F3}Article 15a

1 The power to adopt delegated acts is conferred on the Commission subject to the conditions laid down in this Article.

2 The power to adopt delegated acts referred to in Article 13 shall be conferred on the Commission for a period of five years from 4 July 2018. The Commission shall draw up a report in respect of the delegation of power not later than nine months before the end of the five-year period. The report shall be submitted to the European Parliament and Council. The delegation of power shall be tacitly extended for periods of an identical duration, unless the European Parliament or the Council opposes such extension not later than three months before the end of each period.

3 The delegation of power referred to in Article 13 may be revoked at any time by the European Parliament or by the Council. A decision to revoke shall put an end to the delegation of the power specified in that decision. It shall take effect the day following the publication of the decision in the *Official Journal of the European Union* or at a later date specified therein. It shall not affect the validity of any delegated acts already in force.

4 Before adopting a delegated act, the Commission shall consult experts designated by each Member State in accordance with the principles laid down in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 on Better Law-Making⁽³⁾.

5 As soon as it adopts a delegated act, the Commission shall notify it simultaneously to the European Parliament and to the Council.

6 A delegated act adopted pursuant to Article 13 shall enter into force only if no objection has been expressed either by the European Parliament or the Council within a period of two months of notification of that act to the European Parliament and the Council or if,

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before the expiry of that period, the European Parliament and the Council have both informed the Commission that they will not object. That period shall be extended by two months at the initiative of the European Parliament or of the Council.]

Textual Amendments

- F3** Inserted by [Decision \(EU\) 2018/853 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Regulation \(EU\) No 1257/2013 and Directives 94/63/EC and 2009/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directives 86/278/EEC and 87/217/EEC as regards procedural rules in the field of environmental reporting and repealing Council Directive 91/692/EEC.](#)

Article 16

1 Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive within three years of its notification.

They shall forthwith inform the Commission thereof.

2 Member States shall communicate to the Commission the texts of the provisions of national law which they adopt in the field governed by this Directive.

Article 17

[^{F1}At intervals of three years Member States shall send information to the Commission on the implementation of this Directive, in the form of a sectoral report which shall also cover other pertinent Community Directives. The sectoral reports shall be drawn up on the basis of a questionnaire or outline adopted by the Commission in the form of an implementing act. That implementing act shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 15(2). The questionnaire or outline shall be sent to the Member States six months before the start of the period covered by the report. The report shall be sent to the Commission within nine months of the end of the three-year period covered by it.]

[^{F4}The first report shall cover the period 1995 to 1997 inclusive.

The Commission shall publish a Community report on the implementation of the Directive within nine months of receiving the reports from the Member States.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by [Decision \(EU\) 2018/853 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Regulation \(EU\) No 1257/2013 and Directives 94/63/EC and 2009/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directives 86/278/EEC and 87/217/EEC as regards procedural rules in the field of environmental reporting and repealing Council Directive 91/692/EEC.](#)
- F4** Substituted by [Council Directive of 23 December 1991 standardizing and rationalizing reports on the implementation of certain Directives relating to the environment \(91/692/EEC\).](#)

Article 18

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

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- (1) [^{F1}Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives (OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3).]
- (2) [^{F1}Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission's exercise of implementing powers (OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13).]
- (3) [^{F3}OJ L 123, 12.5.2016, p. 1.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by Decision (EU) 2018/853 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Regulation (EU) No 1257/2013 and Directives 94/63/EC and 2009/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directives 86/278/EEC and 87/217/EEC as regards procedural rules in the field of environmental reporting and repealing Council Directive 91/692/EEC.
- F3** Inserted by Decision (EU) 2018/853 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Regulation (EU) No 1257/2013 and Directives 94/63/EC and 2009/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directives 86/278/EEC and 87/217/EEC as regards procedural rules in the field of environmental reporting and repealing Council Directive 91/692/EEC.