

Proposal for a Council Decision concerning the conclusion, on behalf of the Community, of the new Convention for the Protection of the Rhine

(2000/C 177 E/13)

COM(2000) 61 *final* — 2000/0037(CNS)

(Submitted by the Commission on 7 February 2000)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 174(4) and the first sentence of the first subparagraph of Article 300(2) and the first subparagraph of Article 300(3),

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,

Whereas:

- (1) By Decision 77/586/EEC ⁽¹⁾, the Community concluded the Convention for the Protection of the Rhine against chemical pollution and the Additional Agreement to the Agreement, signed in Berne on 29 April 1963, concerning the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Pollution.
- (2) At the 25th meeting of the Coordinating Group of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, the riparian states considered it necessary to provide for a new Convention for the Protection of the Rhine and to open negotiations to that end.
- (3) The European Commission, acting on behalf of the Community, took part in these negotiations in accordance with the negotiating directives given by the Council and these negotiations were completed in January 1998.
- (4) In the light of the outcome of these negotiations, the Council decided in March 1999 that the Community would sign the new Convention for the Protection of the Rhine, subject to its eventual conclusion, and authorised this signing on behalf of the Community. The new Convention for the Protection of the Rhine was signed on 12 April 1999 in Berne (Switzerland).

(5) The Convention for the Protection of the Rhine is intended to step up multilateral cooperation towards the sustainable development of the Rhine ecosystem, prevent and control the pollution of this river, protect the environment, ensure the sustainable use of hydrological resources, improve the quality of sediments, ensure general flood prevention and protection taking account of ecological requirements, and to help restore the North Sea.

(6) Community policy relating to the environment focuses in particular on a high level of protection; it is based on the principles of precautionary measures and preventive action, the principle of rectification of damage to the environment, preferably at source, and the principle that the polluter pays. In implementing the new Convention for the Protection of the Rhine, the contracting parties should heed these same principles.

(7) The conclusion of the Convention by the European Community will contribute to the pursuit of the objectives and principles laid down in Article 174 of the Treaty establishing the European Community,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The new Convention for the Protection of the Rhine is hereby approved on behalf of the Community.

The text of the Convention is annexed to this Decision.

Article 2

The President of the Council is authorised to designate the person or persons empowered to deposit the instrument of approval with the Government of the Swiss Confederation in accordance with Article 17 of the Convention.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 240, 19.9.1977, p. 35.