

EP

Action Programme Against Marine Pollution

Agreement having been reached at earlier meetings, the conciliation procedure on an action programme against marine pollution was wound up with a vote at the beginning of the Conciliation Committee meeting on 11 October. This enables the fight against accidental marine pollution to be coordinated EU-wide under a Community framework which will have a budget of 7 million euros for the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2006. The main aim of the scheme is to improve information and communication between Member States.

Parliament had adopted 16 amendments to the Council's position at second reading. Compromises were reached on all crucial points. The reference to the OSPAR Convention (Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic) has now been

included in the text of the Decision. The framework will cover not only accidental pollution but also illicit operational spills. Parliament's delegation also managed to push through a definition of accidental pollution, which includes dumped materials, such as munitions. Another important point is that the polluter-pays principle is mentioned in the text.

In practical terms, Community funding will be available not only for courses and workshops, the exchange of experts, exercises, pilot projects, conferences and events and a Community information system but also for the exchange of information on risks relating to dumped munitions, including mapping of the areas concerned. The Community contribution varies from 30 per cent to 100 per cent for different actions. (MJ)

