

## Proposal to Tackle Eco-Crime

On 8 April, Members of the European Parliament voted to back the Commission's draft directive which lays down, for the first time, a Community-wide list of environmental crimes and a minimum set of criminal sanctions to be imposed by Member States, under their own criminal justice systems, for more serious breaches of Community environmental law.

The Parliament thus backed its own rapporteur from the Environment Committee in supporting the Commission's proposed directive, on which Parliament and Council share decision-making power. This was instead of supporting a parallel proposal by the Council, initiated by the Danish government, which would keep criminal sanctions

against polluters solely within the competence of the Member States in Council.

Parliament has amended the Commission's draft directive to ensure that incitement to break the law is also classed as an offence. It wants extradition to be possible, in connection with custodial sentences, so that offenders can be punished in the country where the damage is done. It has added pollution of the air, soil or water with harmful substances or ionising radiation to the list of offences and has deleted the annex itemising the existing Community legislation protecting the environment, preferring to refer to breaches of law in general terms. (MJ)

