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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and
Consumer Protection

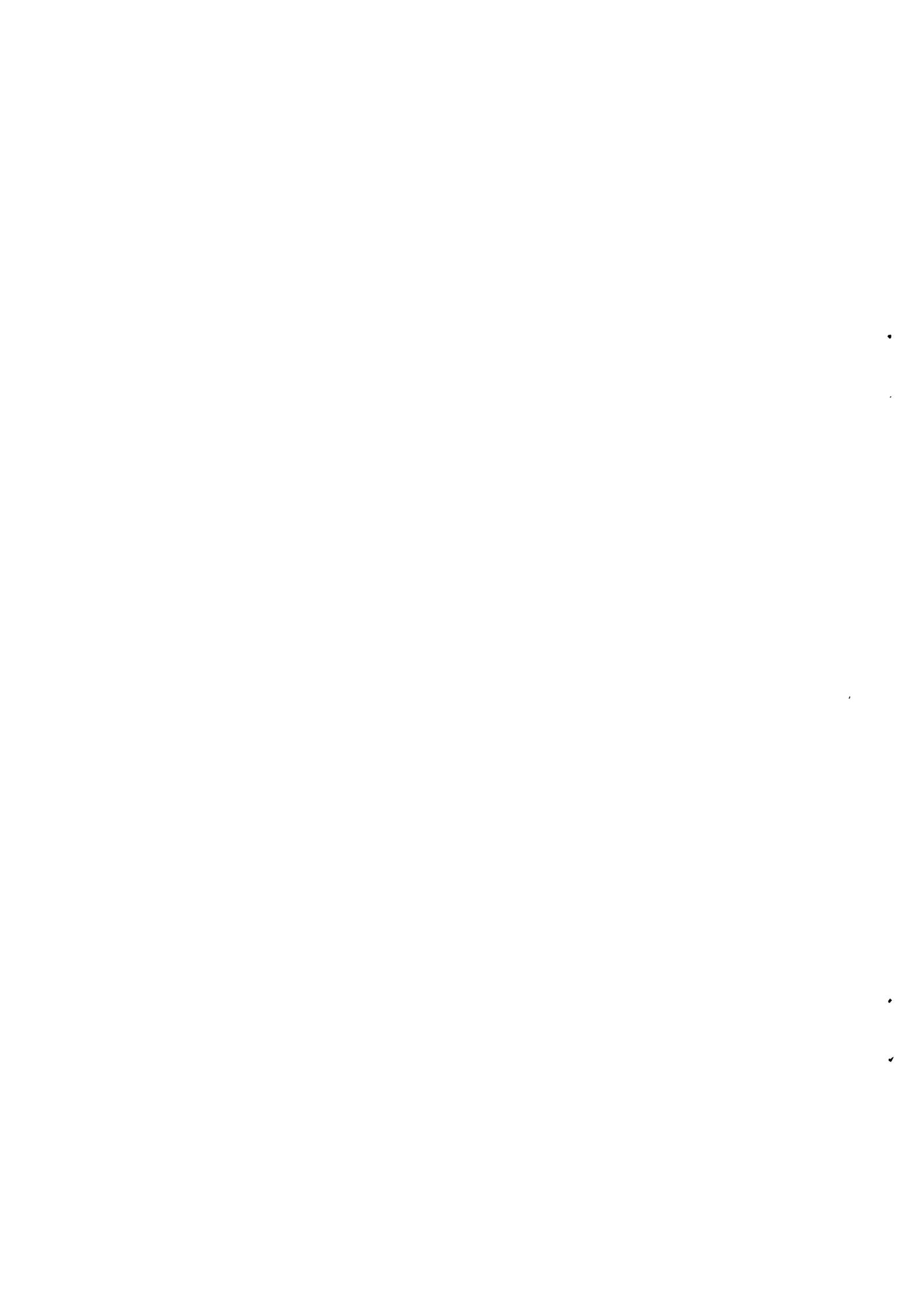
on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the
Council (Doc. 265/76) for a directive on the ~~the~~ quality requirements for waters
capable of supporting freshwater fish

Rapporteur: Mrs E. KRUCHOW
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PE 46.474/fin.

1.2.1

English Edition



By letter of 12 August 1976, the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Articles 100 and 235 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a directive on the quality requirements for waters capable of supporting freshwater fish.

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection as the committee responsible.

On 27 September 1976 the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection appointed Mrs Kruchow rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meetings of 20 October and 25 November 1976.

At its meeting of 25 November 1976 the committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement.

Present: Mr Jahn, acting chairman and vice-chairman; Mrs Kruchow, vice-chairman and rapporteur; Miss Boothroyd, Mr Brégégère, Mr Didier, Lady Fisher of Rednal, Sir Peter Kirk, Mr Ney, Mr Plebe, Mrs Squarcialupi and Mr Veronesi.

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
A. MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION	5
B. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	7

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission/^{of the European Communities} to the Council for a directive on the quality requirements for waters capable of supporting freshwater fish

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council¹,
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Articles 100 and 235 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 265/76),
 - having regard to the proposal concerning the continuation and implementation of a European Community policy and Action Programme on the Environment²,
 - having regard to the Communication of the Commission concerning a Research and Development Programme of the European Economic Community in the field of Environmental Protection (1976-1980)³,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection (Doc. 465/76),
1. Affirms the necessity of protecting Member States' freshwater areas against damage to their ecosystems;
 2. Affirms the need for plans to be drawn up in each individual country setting out the objectives to be met for the various freshwater areas;
 3. Considers it necessary not only to maintain fish stocks where such still exist, but also to restore the conditions necessary for them where they no longer exist on account of pollution or other influences;
 4. Considers that freshwater areas which are to be protected in this way or whose quality is to be restored or newly established in accordance with the objectives, should include:

¹ OJ No. C 202, 28.8.1976, p.3

² OJ No. C 115, 24.5.1976, p.1

³ OJ No. C 78, 3.4.1976, p.2

running or standing fresh water which supports or is capable of supporting fish belonging to indigenous species presenting a natural diversity or species whose presence is judged desirable for water managing purposes;

5. Emphasizes the need for limit values laid down for the various freshwater qualities to be based on high-quality scientific data;
6. Desires to draw especially to the attention of the Member States the need for each country to take freshwater areas into consideration in its physical planning;
7. Calls on Member States to give far more consideration than hitherto in their planning to all economic circumstances;
8. Urges Member States to use common reference data and analytical methods, here as in other areas under the programme of action on the environment; furthermore, calls attention to the 1976-1978 Research Programme on reference materials and methods and urges the Commission to introduce any improved reference and measurement methods that may be suggested by the latest research results.
9. Considers that cooperation with third countries in combating pollution is an obvious necessity and, in the matter of freshwater areas, it will have to be possible to draw up conventions on the lines of those which have been entered into in recent years, for instance on the protection of the Mediterranean, the Baltic, the Rhine, etc.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. In the planning of measures to combat pollution, it is important first of all to establish the quality of the environment desired in the area concerned. For example, it is essential, when setting up or extending purification plants for a given area, that decisions should be taken in advance as to the quality which it is desired to attain or maintain for the recipient into which the effluent is to flow (rivers, lakes, fjords or sea). The higher the quality of the environment required, the better the effluent must be purified and the more money it costs.

2. The quality objectives for the recipients of a given area must therefore be drawn up as early as possible in the country's physical planning.

3. There are a number of different uses for which surface waters may be required, the following being a few examples; they have not been placed in any order of priority and should not be regarded as exhaustive:

- (a) the recipient is required to serve as a reference area for scientific studies.
- (b) the water in the recipient is to be suitable for drinking-water supplies, or simply for watering livestock
- (c) the recipient is to be suitable for fishing-waters both for sport and commercial fishing, or fish farming, and/or suitable as growth or transit areas for fish to be caught elsewhere
- (e) the recipient is intended to have an aesthetically satisfying appearance
- (f) the recipient is intended only for purposes which do not require special qualities.

4. The proposal for a directive submitted by the Commission deals particularly with waters required to support various types of freshwater fish. The Committee on the Environment and Public Health would like to emphasize here how important it is for the industrialized countries to maintain their natural resources such as areas of freshwater. This is important not merely for preserving species of fish which are threatened

with extinction and those natural resources which still remain; it is also necessary to keep nature in ecological balance.

5. Unfortunately, various interests are often in conflict. The pollution of freshwater is due not simply to the discharge of industrial and household effluents. Agricultural use frequently has very important consequences not solely in the form of pollution, but also in its physical effects. The flow of water may be interfered with or pipes may be laid. Water catchment interests may also be in conflict with the desire to protect freshwater areas.

6. It is precisely because the problems are so complex that an overall plan is necessary and, in the committee's opinion, such a plan must also provide for the protection of natural areas, including waters capable of supporting freshwater fish. The Community must, therefore, ensure that the plans drawn up by individual Member States allow for the preservation of natural resources and do not further distort the ecological balance, but rather restore it where necessary.

7. In the assessment of waters, whether a river, a lake or the sea, a number of factors must be considered. These factors may be broken down as follows:

1. physical factors, 2. chemical factors, 3. biological factors.

Among physical factors the temperature of the watercourse is of particular importance. Chemical factors, in addition to nutrient salts, oxygen content, etc., also include toxic substances discharged into the waters. Biological assessment involves a survey of the life forms, (e.g. species of fish and lower creatures) living in the waters examined. In determining this, it is possible to assess the degree of pollution.

8. It goes without saying that when so many factors affect the chances of survival for fish and other forms of life in the area concerned, new research results may justify different reference and measuring methods. It is, therefore, important that these be continually improved.