Barcelona Convention: New Protocols and Amendments

The European Parliament has approved the Commission’s proposals (consultation procedure, without a report) concerning EU Council Decisions on the conclusion of Protocols and amendments to the Barcelona Convention on the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution.

Since signing the Convention in 1977, the EU has brought forward numerous Protocols aimed at strengthening the prevention of marine pollution. In the context of the revision and improvement of the legal provisions of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), the contracting parties adopted a new Protocol to the Barcelona Convention in 1995, signed by 16 Mediterranean countries and the Community; this Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, replaces an existing Protocol.

The Commission has therefore proposed that the Council approve this revised Protocol and its Annexes covering areas of Community responsibility on the environment.

The amendments included in the revised Protocol are designed to strengthen protection and improve the natural and cultural heritage of the Mediterranean through the designation of specially protected areas and the tightening of conservation measures for endangered species. The text also aims to protect natural habitats and maintain biological diversity in the long term.

The new Protocol includes an Annex covering common criteria for the choice of protected marine and coastal areas, and another concerning endangered species and those whose exploitation should be regulated.

The EU’s endorsement of the text will be accompanied by a specific declaration, specifying that the EU is participating in the implementation of provisions outlined in Annexes to the Protocol through the creation of the Natura 2000 network.

The Commission proposes (COM(99)28), that on behalf of the Union the Council should endorse amendments to the Protocol on the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Marine Pollution. The proposed changes aim primarily to strengthen protection against pollution from land-based sources and introduce preventative measures – for example, regarding the discharge of untreated domestic and industrial waste containing toxic and persistent substances liable to bio-accumulate.

The new Protocol also contains programmes and measures aimed at addressing pollution from certain land-based sources and activities listed in an Annex.

The Commission further proposes (COM(99)29), that the Council adopt a Decision endorsing the amendments and modifications to the Protocol regarding the prevention and reduction of pollution caused by discharges from ships and aircraft.

REFERENCES TO OTHER TOPICS

UN: Human Development Report

- Tax on Internet Access
  The UN Human Development Report sees the lack of internet access as exacerbating inequalities. It gives as an example that it costs $75 and takes five days to send a 40-page document from Madagascar to the Côte d’Ivoire; and it costs $45 and takes half an hour to fax it. However, it costs around 20 cents and takes two minutes to send it by e-mail, which can go to thousands of people at no extra cost.
  It calls for a tax on information sent through the internet, with the proceeds used to help provide expensive equipment in poor countries. With rapid growth of the internet, a very small tax could still raise sums far in excess of the world’s rich countries’ official aid budgets.

- Gender Inequality
  According to statistics gathered for the Report, gender inequality remains a fact of life in every society in the world. The index of human development is lower for women that for men in all UN countries without exception.

- International Codes of Conduct
  Multinationals are too dominant in the world economy for voluntary codes of conduct to be enough, the Report says. International codes of conduct should also be developed for banks and other financial institutions, covering secrecy and risk assessment.

Montreal Protocol

- 19th Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group
  Representatives discussed strengthening rules that govern the use of ozone-depleting substances and considered national efforts to eliminate those chemicals.

ECOSOC: Emphasis on Core Duties

Francesco Paolo Fulci (Italy), President of the Economic and Social Council, said at the end of April that efforts were being made to instil new life into the Council with the effective implementation of the provisions of Article 65 of the Charter. That Article states that the Economic and Social Council may furnish information to the Security Council and also assist it upon request. Mr. Fulci said efforts were being made to transform ECOSOC from being a "mini-General Assembly" into what it was originally meant to do – to cope with the social and economic problems of States and with human rights.

He also said it had been decided that a 10-point manifesto should be prepared which outlined what the Economic and Social Council believed should be a strategy to eradicate poverty from the world. It would be based on all the documents adopted by the various UN conferences. "Our hope is that its message, which should be written in clear words, would be adopted at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council July session in Geneva," he said.

(EPL will report on the July session in the next issue)

Meeting between ECOSOC and Bretton Woods Institutions

The theme of the meeting was the functioning of international financial markets and stability in financing for development.

Solid cooperation with the international financial institutions was essential for making ECOSOC truly action and results-oriented, the President of the Council said.
ECOSOC regarded the meeting as an example of the Council’s success in building bridges between the United Nations and the international financial institutions, and especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

On the architecture of the international financial system, participants had noted the positive initial steps taken to address the financial crisis. Measures should continue to be taken to strengthen the international financial architecture, keeping in view the need for a holistic approach and, above all, never forgetting the needs of the developing countries. Particular attention had been paid to the need to enhance transparency in institutions, markets, governments and international organisations.

Participants had stressed that debt relief required additional resources, and that it should not be at the expense of development assistance.

**UNCTAD: Agenda for UNCTAD**

The substantive agenda for the tenth quadrennial conference of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to be held in Bangkok from 12–20 February 2000, has been adopted. The theme of the conference will be “Developmental strategies in an increasingly interdependent world: applying the lessons of the past to make globalisation an effective instrument for the development of all countries and all people.”

The text of the resolution (TBT/1) stresses the mixed impact of globalisation on development, including the persistence of economic disparities among nations and the risk of further marginalisation for a number of developing and least developed countries.

For more information contact UNCTAD, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Fax: +41-22-907 0043.

**Maputo Declaration**

1. We, the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and their adherents, with signatory States, are gathered in Maputo, Mozambique, joined by international organisations and institutions, particularly non-governmental organisations, to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the total eradication of an insidious instrument of war and terror: anti-personnel mines.

2. Even now, at the end of the century, anti-personnel mines continue to maim and kill countless innocent people each day; force families to flee their lands and children to abandon their schools and playgrounds; and prevent millions of people from returning to rebuild their homes and their lives. The real or suspected presence of anti-personnel mines continues to deny access to much-needed resources and services and cripples normal social and economic development.

3. We raise our serious concern at the continued use of anti-personnel mines in areas of instability around the world. Such acts are contrary to the aims of the Convention; they exacerbate tensions, undermine confidence and impede diplomatic efforts to find peaceful solutions to conflicts.

4. Therefore, we call on all States Parties to the APLC/MSP to implement fully the rapid entry-into-force of the Convention, to ensure that the Convention is fully realized in the contexts and causes of the use of anti-personnel mines.

5. We call for the rapid conclusion of the accession of all those States that continue to use anti-personnel mines, and to cease development, production and transfers, and to effect removal of their anti-personnel mines and their depots.

6. To the international community: promulgate, implement and universalize the Convention, the new international standard and norm of development.

7. To the international community: promote and develop financial mechanisms and means of assistance.

8. To those who can offer assistance: help on these tasks.

9. To those that have not yet joined this Convention: adhere to the Convention.

10. To those that have not yet joined this community of States Parties: accede quickly to the Convention. To those who have signed: ratify. If ratification will take more time: provisionally apply the terms of the Convention while you put in place the necessary domestic legislation.

11. To the international community: promote, implement and universalize the Convention, the new international standard and norm of development.

12. In this spirit, we voice our outrage at the unabated use of anti-personnel mines in conflicts around the world. To those few signatories who continue to use these weapons, this is a violation of the object and purpose of the Convention that you solemnly signed. We call upon you to respect and implement your commitments.

13. Know that, as a community dedicated to seeing an end to the use of anti-personnel mines, our assistance and cooperation will flow primarily to those who have foresworn the use of these weapons forever through adherence to and implementation of the Convention.

14. Driven by the sad reality that the people of the world will continue to suffer the consequences of the use of anti-personnel mines for many years to come, we believe it crucial that we use this First Meeting of the States Parties to ensure that we make continued, measurable progress in our future efforts to eradicate anti-personnel mines and to alleviate the humanitarian crisis caused by them.

15. We recognise that anti-personnel mines represent a major public health threat. The plight of mine victims has revealed the inadequacy of assistance for victims in the countries most affected. Such assistance must be integrated into broader public health and socio-economic strategies to ensure not simply short-term care for victims, but special attention to me