

# ARCHIVES HISTORIQUES DE LA COMMISSION

COLLECTION RELIEE DES  
DOCUMENTS "COM"

COM (83) 306

Vol. 1983/0125

Historical Archives of the European Commission

### ***Disclaimer***

Conformément au règlement (CEE, Euratom) n° 354/83 du Conseil du 1er février 1983 concernant l'ouverture au public des archives historiques de la Communauté économique européenne et de la Communauté européenne de l'énergie atomique (JO L 43 du 15.2.1983, p. 1), tel que modifié par le règlement (CE, Euratom) n° 1700/2003 du 22 septembre 2003 (JO L 243 du 27.9.2003, p. 1), ce dossier est ouvert au public. Le cas échéant, les documents classifiés présents dans ce dossier ont été déclassifiés conformément à l'article 5 dudit règlement.

In accordance with Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No 354/83 of 1 February 1983 concerning the opening to the public of the historical archives of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community (OJ L 43, 15.2.1983, p. 1), as amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1700/2003 of 22 September 2003 (OJ L 243, 27.9.2003, p. 1), this file is open to the public. Where necessary, classified documents in this file have been declassified in conformity with Article 5 of the aforementioned regulation.

In Übereinstimmung mit der Verordnung (EWG, Euratom) Nr. 354/83 des Rates vom 1. Februar 1983 über die Freigabe der historischen Archive der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft und der Europäischen Atomgemeinschaft (ABl. L 43 vom 15.2.1983, S. 1), geändert durch die Verordnung (EG, Euratom) Nr. 1700/2003 vom 22. September 2003 (ABl. L 243 vom 27.9.2003, S. 1), ist diese Datei der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich. Soweit erforderlich, wurden die Verschlussachen in dieser Datei in Übereinstimmung mit Artikel 5 der genannten Verordnung freigegeben.

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(83) 306 final

Brussels, 2 June 1983

## COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

concerning the preparation of directives on arsenic  
pursuant to Council Directive 76/464/EEC

-----

COM(83) 306 final

Communication from the Commission to the Council  
concerning the preparation of directives on  
arsenic pursuant to Council Directive 76/464/EEC<sup>1</sup>

---

1. On 4 May 1976, the Council adopted Directive 76/464/EEC on pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community<sup>1</sup>; the aim of the Directive is to eliminate or reduce water pollution caused by the dangerous substances belonging to the families and groups of substances included in Lists I and II annexed to the Directive.

Directive 76/464/EEC is an outline Directive which - in respect of List I substances - is to be applied by means of implementing directives containing limit values applicable to the emission standards for the effluents concerned and quality objectives for the aquatic environment.

2. Group 4 of List I comprises "substances in respect of which it has been proved that they possess carcinogenic properties in or via the aquatic environment".

The Commission has studied arsenic and the mineral compounds of arsenic (collectively referred to below as arsenic) and has reached the following conclusions:

3. Arsenic is a naturally-occurring pollutant of surface waters and is normally present at concentrations of between 1 and 10 ug/litre.

.../...

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ No L 129, 18.05.1976, p. 23.

It has been proved that arsenic has carcinogenic properties for man either in or via the aquatic environment.

It should therefore be classified as one of the substances to be included on List I in the Annex to Directive 76/464/EEC.

4. The data currently available show that arsenic concentrations in Community waters are below the maximum admissible concentration of 50 ug/l for water intended for human consumption (Directive 80/778/EEC)<sup>1</sup>.

These concentrations are also lower than the mandatory values (100-50 ug/l) and the guide values (50-10 ug/l) for surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water (Directive 75/440/EEC)<sup>2</sup>.

Furthermore, arsenic concentrations in river sediments are steadily falling, particularly in the Rhine, and it has been shown that the present level of arsenic in such sediments is no higher than the level in 1900; this proves that the amount of arsenic being discharged is decreasing rather than increasing.

5. The human organism ingests a much lower proportion of arsenic from drinking water than from food. According to the present state of knowledge, arsenic concentration in Community waters does not therefore represent a danger to human health.
6. The data currently available on the quality of Community surface waters show that the major proportion of the arsenic present in the environment is attributable to the natural pollution load or to sources difficult to monitor. Direct industrial discharges are responsible for only local increases in arsenic concentrations, particularly in the zones directly affected by such discharges.

.../...

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ No L 229, 30.08.1980, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> OJ No L 194, 25.07.1975, p. 26.

7. The Commission is of the opinion that there is no need to draw up a specific implementing directive for arsenic within the framework of Directive 76/464/EEC.
8. Arsenic should therefore be subject to the provisions applicable to substances on List II in the Annex to Directive 76/464/EEC.

In the Commission's view, there is therefore a need to monitor arsenic concentrations in Community waters, particularly downstream of industrial discharge points.

If arsenic concentrations were to increase or if new insight is gained into the effects of arsenic on man or his environment, the Commission will, if necessary, put forward appropriate proposals to the Council.