



Manual of European Environmental Policy

The following pages are a section from the Manual of European Environmental Policy written by the Institute for European Environmental Policy.

The Manual was published by Earthscan/Routledge from 2010 to 2012. It was designed as an on-line interactive reference work and annual printed versions were also produced.

This section is the text of the Manual as published in 2012. It is therefore important to note the following:

- The contents have not been updated since 2012 and no guarantee is given of the accuracy of the contents given potential subsequent developments.
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Farmer, A.M. (2012) (Editor). Manual of European Environmental Policy. 1043pp. Routledge, London.



Historical legislation: Information on the state of the environment (CORINE)

Formal references	
85/338/EEC (OJ L176 6.7.85)	Decision on the adoption of the Proposed Commission work programme concerning an experimental project for gathering, coordinating and ensuring the consistency of information on the state of the environment and natural resources in the Community (CORINE)
Proposed 14.10.83 – COM(83)528 (OJ L/1985/176/14)	
Legal base	Article 352 TFEU (originally Article 235 EEC Treaty)
90/150/EEC (OJ L 81 28.3.90) Proposed 22.9.89 – COM(89)542	Amendment
Legal base	Article 192 TFEU (originally Article 130S EEC Treaty)
Binding dates	
Start of programme	1 January 1985 for four years, extended a further two years

Note: These Decisions have now lapsed and the work programme is being continued by the [European Environment Agency](#).

Purpose of the Decisions

The general aim was to assemble basic information on the state of the environment in the Community in a number of specific fields. Decision 85/338/EEC set up an experimental project – known as CORINE – to collate information in four fields of priority concern:

- Biotopes for conservation.
- Acid deposition.
- Protection of the Mediterranean environment.
- Improvement in comparability and availability of data and methods of analysing data.

CORINE should not be confused with reports on the state of the environment published by the Commission for 1977, 1979, 1986 and 1992, although these reports were to increasingly depend on the information gathered under the CORINE programme¹ ([COM\(92\)23](#))

Summary of the Decisions

Decision 85/338/EEC

A four-year work programme starting from 1 January 1985 was authorized as an experimental project at an estimated cost of 4 million ECUs under which the Commission was to gather, coordinate and ensure the consistency of information on the state of the environment in the Community. The programme covered four priority fields:

- i. Biotopes of major importance for nature conservation: the aim was to identify and describe such biotopes in the Community, working closely with the Council of Europe.
- ii. Acid deposition: the aim was to contribute to the solution of the ‘acid rain’ problem by gathering consistent information on emissions to air and giving an overall picture of damage at Community level.
- iii. Protection of the environment in the Mediterranean region: the aim was to gather consistent information on environmental resources most directly affected by development programmes.
- iv. Improvement in the comparability and availability of data and in the methods of analysing data: work was to include organization of exchange of information, setting up an inventory of various kinds of data systems and choice of computer techniques for information management.

Decision 90/150/EEC

Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90 on the establishment of the [European Environment Agency](#) and the European Environment Information and Observation Network provided the framework for a permanent environmental information system to supersede and build on the CORINE programme. Pending the establishment of the network, Decision 90/150/EEC extended the CORINE programme for a two-year period, and increased its budget from 4 to 10.5 million ECUs. The Commission was required to submit a report at the end of the second year and a final report to the European Parliament and the Council.

Development of the Decisions

The origin of the Decisions goes back to June 1974 when the Italian government presented a memorandum to the Council asking for efforts to be made to implement that part of the Community environment programme referring to improvement of the environment. The Council as a result requested the Commission in November 1974 to begin a study of the classification of the Community on the basis of its environmental characteristics so that the required objectives and measures could be identified and determined. Thus began the project which came to be known as ‘ecological mapping’.

After an initial study carried out by the Commission, with the help of national experts, of the various methods in use within the Community, to plot environmental information on maps and charts, a four-phase study was proposed and included in the 1977–1981 Community environment

programme. The initial phase was devoted to devising a pilot method to be used in a number of case studies within Member States. The subsequent phases were dependent on Council approval of the recommended method.

The Commission selected a method devised by Professor Ammer of Munich University which was based on the principle of plotting environmental characteristics by kilometre squares using different colours and shades. Twelve regional case studies were carried out in Member States; the report of the United Kingdom study in South Yorkshire contained a fundamental criticism of the method used, challenging its validity². Other studies were carried out on such subjects as remote sensing and computer applications.

By the end of 1982 the Commission reported that the studies had revealed that the programme was far too theoretical and would need to be modified. There followed the proposal for a very much reduced effort concentrating initially on certain priority areas. The Decision as adopted showed very little difference in essentials though finance was reduced from 5.8 million to 4 million ECUs and the Council insisted on the project being described as experimental with no specific commitment to further stages.

The basic concept of a large system covering all aspects remained with the emphasis rather more on computer techniques for information management. The latest very much modified and reduced scale of action was put forward as the first stage of such a comprehensive Community system.

Following the Commission's proposal in July 1989 to establish a European Environmental Agency, the Commission proposed an amendment to Decision 85/338/EEC to extend the CORINE programme by two years and increase its budgetary allocation as a transitional measure pending the establishment of a permanent European environment information and observation network into which the CORINE programme would be absorbed. Decision 90/150 extended the programme only to 1 January 1991, but in practice it continued beyond that date, the intention being to absorb it into the European Environment Agency.

Implementation of the Decisions

This legislation does not require implementation by Member States themselves.

Enforcement and court cases

No cases have been concluded by the European Court of Justice relevant to the Decisions.

Related legislation

Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90 on the establishment of the [European Environment Agency](#) and the European Environment Information and Observation Network. This provided the framework

for a permanent environmental information system which superseded and built on the CORINE programme.

References

1. CEC (1987) *The State of the Environment in the European Community 1986*, EUR 10633.
2. France, J and Briggs, D J (1986) Environmental mapping of the European Community: A review of the proposed method, *Journal of the Operational Research Society* 31 (6), pp 485–496.