

# **Developments in Environmental Impact Assessment**

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## **Problems in application?**

- Comprehensive information on old MSs:  
The “5 years report”  
COM(2003) 334 final (23 June 2003)
- Additional sources (in old and new MSs):
  - Complaints
  - Petitions
  - Parliamentary questions
  - Problems in EU co-funded projects

## Some statistics

- Over one third of complaints to the Commission are about environment
- One fifth of infringement cases relate to environmental directives
- 17% of all DG Env open cases concern EIA (over 200 cases)

Data as at 10.03.2005

## EIA – weaknesses?

- Screening:
  - Annex III criteria not properly taken into account, different thresholds and criteria in MSs
- Poor quality of EIA reports:
  - alternatives, cumulative effects
- « Salami-slicing », project-splitting
- Influence of EIA on decision-making
- Treatment of natural and technological risks
- Coverage of implications for health

## **What's happening in Brussels (1)**

- Research projects:
  - Relationship between EIA and SEA directives
  - Screening practices and thresholds
  - Health and risk assessment in EIAs, Annex I thresholds and relationship between the Annexes

## **What's happening in Brussels (2)**

- New guidance documents:
  - Article 2.3 (exemptions)
  - Quality assurance of EIAs
  - Definitions of project categories in the Annexes

(existing guidance covers: screening; scoping; review of EIAs; indirect and cumulative impacts & impact interactions)
- Reflection on future improvements to the EIA Directive

## What could be improved in the EIA Directive? (i)

- Closing the gap with the SEA Directive:
  - screening: consultation of environmental authorities (and reasons for negative screening)
  - alternatives
  - monitoring
  - quality assurance
- Public consultation in screening and scoping

## What could be improved in the EIA Directive? (ii)

- Changes to the Annexes
  - New categories?
  - Moving projects between the Annexes?
  - Definitions?
- Relationship with other Directives (e.g. IPPC, Habitats Directive...)?
- Improved / clearer definitions:
  - « project », « development consent » ...
- Approach to screening
- 'Better Regulation' agenda
- ...

# **Thank you**

For further information please visit the  
EIA and SEA homepage:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/eia/home.htm>