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A7-0356/2013

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RECOMMENDATION

on the draft Council decision on the acceptance on behalf of the European Union of the Amendment to Articles 25 and 26 of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

(12713/2013 – C7-0304/2013 – 2013/0127(NLE))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Rapporteur: Matthias Groote

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

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DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

on the draft Council decision on the acceptance on behalf of the European Union of the Amendment to Articles 25 and 26 of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (12713/2013 – C7-0304/2013 – 2013/0127(NLE))

(Consent)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (12713/2013),
 - having regard to the Amendment to Articles 25 and 26 of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (12713/2013),
 - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 192(1) and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C7-0304/2013),
 - having regard to Rules 81 and 90(7) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (A7-0356/2013),
1. Consents to the acceptance of the Amendment to Articles 25 and 26 of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes on behalf of the European Union;
 2. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

On 24 April 2013, the Commission published a proposal¹ for a Council Decision to accept the Amendment to Articles 25 and 26 of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (the "Helsinki Convention").

The Convention aims at establishing a framework for bilateral or multilateral cooperation to prevent and control the pollution of transboundary watercourses and the rational use of water by countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The EU is a Party to the Convention since 1995.

In 2003, Parties to the Convention expressed the wish to allow countries situated outside of the UNECE region to become Parties to this Convention in order to promote river basin cooperation throughout the world. The European Community participated in the 2003 Meeting of Parties which adopted the amendment allowing any State that is a Member of the United Nations to accede to the Convention upon approval of the Parties.

Further to two thirds of the Parties having formally accepted the amendment by 8 November 2012, the amendment entered into force for those Parties on 6 February 2013². The EU is currently one of a few remaining Parties not having formally accepted the amendment yet. The formal acceptance of the Amendment to Articles 25 and 26 requires, under Article 218(6) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the consent of the European Parliament.

With the amendments in force, the Convention will be particularly important for countries bordering the UNECE region such as Afghanistan, China, Iran and certain Central Asian States.

In a Resolution on the 6th World Water Forum adopted on 15 March 2012, the European Parliament already expressed its position on the amendment, calling upon the Commission "to promote the entry into force of the amendments to the Helsinki Convention in order to extend the scope of this instrument beyond solely the UNECE countries".

In view of the above considerations, the Rapporteur recommends that Parliament consents to the amendment to Articles 25 and 26 of the Convention in order to open the Convention globally and enable accession of non UNECE countries willing to do so.

¹ COM(2013)0239

² According to Art. 21/4 of the Convention, amendments to the Convention shall enter into force for the Parties to the Convention which have accepted it on the ninetieth day after the date on which two thirds of those Parties have deposited with the Depositary their instruments of acceptance of the amendment.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	17.10.2013
Result of final vote	+: 49 -: 0 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Pilar Ayuso, Sandrine Bélier, Biljana Borzan, Martin Callanan, Nessa Childers, Tadeusz Cymański, Spyros Danellis, Chris Davies, Bas Eickhout, Jill Evans, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Matthias Groote, Jolanta Emilia Hibner, Holger Kraemer, Peter Liese, Kartika Tamara Liotard, Zofija Mazej Kukovič, Linda McAvan, Gilles Pargneaux, Andrés Perelló Rodríguez, Pavel Poc, Anna Rosbach, Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, Kārlis Šadurskis, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Carl Schlyter, Horst Schnellhardt, Richard Seeber, Bogusław Sonik
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Nikos Chrysogelos, Julie Girling, Sergej Kozlík, Marlene Mizzi, Marit Paulsen, Christel Schaldemose, Sophocles Sophocleous, Alda Sousa, Rebecca Taylor, Andrea Zanoni
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Luís Paulo Alves, Arkadiusz Tomasz Bratkowski, Leonardo Domenici, Béla Glattfelder, Jacek Olgierd Kurski, Anthea McIntyre, Jens Nilsson, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Dimitar Stoyanov, Csaba Óry