

PRESS RELEASE

Strasbourg, 15 November, 2001

Spanish Hydrological Plan

Parliament's opposition to the Spanish Hydrological Plan must not be ignored

The Greens/European Free Alliance in the European Parliament today voiced concern that the European Parliament's opposition to the Spanish Hydrological Plan, voted in plenary this morning, may go unheard. MEPs voted in favour of a clause that expressed the Parliament's grave worries about the development of unsustainable water management schemes and infrastructures by the Spanish Government by 224 in favour, 161 against and 30 abstentions. As the Flemming report was later rejected (because of the abstention of PSE over the liberalisation of water services and the PPE voting against its own report) this important vote against the hydrological plan could be overseen.

Alex de Roo MEP, Vice- Chair of the parliament's Environment Committee said the vote was very indicative:

"The Parliament today confirmed its opposition to this plan which involves building up to 118 new dams and widespread irrigation infrastructure throughout Spain, without addressing the issue of sustainable water use through pricing mechanisms and other water conservation measures."

"This vote sends a message of solidarity to the Spanish movement against the Hydrological Plan. The Spanish Government lost that vote despite playing dirty and inserting much pressure on other political groups or parties."

"We must now build on this co-operation to form a Europe-wide coalition for a new water culture. Our campaign will have to go beyond Spain and address the general issue of public access to water."

Paragraph 28 which received the support of the majority stated that the European parliament:

"Is deeply worried about the precedent set by proposals for the development of unsustainable water management schemes across Europe, such as the Spanish National Hydrological Plan (NHP), adopted by the Spanish Senate on 20 June 2001 and which includes proposals to build up to 118 new dams and widespread irrigation infrastructure, as they do not address the issue of sustainable water use through pricing mechanisms and other water conservation measures;"

The debate on water pricing and the implementation of the water framework directive will continue in the European parliament's Environment Committee.

For more information: **Press Office of the Green/EFA Group**

Helmut Weixler: mobile phone: +32-75-67 13 40, phone: +32-2-284 46 83 (Bxl), +33-3-8817 4760 (Stb), e-mail: hweixler@europarl.eu.int

Eluned Haf: mobile phone: +32-497-48 02 55, phone: +32-2-284 1665 (Bxl), +33-3-8817 2936 (Stb), e-mail: ehaf@europarl.eu.int

Isabelle Zerrouk: mobile phone: +32-477-31 94 74, phone: +32-2-284 2742 (Bxl), +33-3-8817 4032(Stb), e-mail: izerrouk@europarl.eu.int

FAX: +32-2-284 4944 (Brussels), +33-3-88 241 196 (Strasbourg) www.greens-efa.org