

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1860/08
by Cornelis Visser (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: The Deltanatuur project and the Water Framework Directive

As part of the Deltanatuur project the Netherlands Government and the province of South Holland are planning to create a new 400-hectare large nature area in the Zuiderdiep polders in the communes of Goedereede and Dirksland. The Zuiderdiep polders are situated a short distance from the North Sea. In the polders themselves and in the surrounding polders there is said to be saltwater seepage. The Zuiderdiep waterway runs through the polder.

The conversion of fertile farmland into a nature area has caused unrest in the region. The communes of Goedereede and Dirksland have requested reconsideration of the nature conservancy plans by the provincial and the national governments.

In its reply to this question the Netherlands Government includes the comment that the constant change in the salt content of the Zuiderdiep does not comply with the aims of the Water Framework Directive. The Government uses this in its argument for going ahead with the nature project.

Does the Commission take the view that implementation of the Water Framework Directive requires a Member State to deal with changes in the salt content of a watercourse as a result of saltwater seepage? If so, what are the arguments for this?

If not, does the Commission take the view that the above reference to the Water Framework Directive, as a reason for designating a new nature area as part of national policy, is likely to cause incomprehension and a decline in the support of European policy by the citizens and communes concerned?