

Table 1- European Union Member-States position regarding the proposed SEA Directive

	Actual practice / Legal basis	Position re. SEA proposed Directive
Austria	<p>Yes. Limited. Voluntarily</p> <p>Scope: sectoral policies (energy, transports); land-use programmes and plans; Trans-European Network pilot-study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: creates minimum standards for environmental issues and public participation, ensures consideration of environmental aspects in planning and programme development procedures, it is flexible and enables integration into existing national planning procedures • weaknesses: scope is not adequate, lacks quality standards for environmentally sound planning, relationship between SEA and EIA is not well-reflected
Belgium	<p>Yes. Limited. EIA Act</p> <p>Scope: Sectoral plans (waste, recreation, re-allotment) and land-use plans (town and rural)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: good motivation for responsible authorities to take into account results of the environmental evaluation • weaknesses: missing relationship between EIA and SEA
Denmark	<p>Yes. Reasonable. Prime Minister's Office Circular in 1993; guidelines in 1993</p> <p>Scope: Bills and other government proposals, regional plans, other plans and programmes presented to Parliament</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: step towards integration of SEA in policy, planning and programme decision • weaknesses: limited scope, misses the policy level and overall integration into decision-making
Finland	<p>Yes. Reasonable. EIA Act and various other parts of Finnish legislation: guidelines in 1998</p> <p>Scope: government bills; action plans and economic strategies; regional, general and detailed physical plans; waste, forestry, water plans and programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: widening the field of application of environmental assessment • weaknesses: but it is a minor step as it is restricted to town and country planning and programmes; restricted scope also in terms of definition of decision-making process, development consent and provisions on the nature, size, location or operating conditions; there is a need for agreed SEA principles at the European level

France	<p>Yes. Reasonable. 1993 requirement for “groups of projects”; planning legislation and guidelines</p> <p>Scope: transport, mining, water development, waste, energy plans, municipal zoning plans, regional plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: limited scope to plans and programmes • weaknesses: passage from voluntary to mandatory basis; need to stress the importance and the transparency of this instrument; lack of contrasted alternatives; methodological problems regarding content of the study, follow-up and monitoring, need for external expertise
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Germany	<p>Yes. Reasonable. EIA Act</p> <p>Scope: building schemes and zoning plans, plans and programmes at local and regional level if there is an impact on protected areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: harmonizing legal conditions in Member States if there is a planning system; it deals clearly with relationship between environmental information and justification of decision • weaknesses: no obligation for Member States to introduce planning systems, concept of town and country planning means different things in different States, scope unclear re, types of plans and extent of modification, misses linkage with EIA, not really integrated in existing planning systems (for example the “stops”), lack of methods, Member States are likely to be affected by nearly every plan
Greece	<p>Yes. Limited. Voluntarily or European demand</p> <p>Scope: land-use plans and programmes, particularly application for Structural Funds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: assessment of cumulative impacts • weaknesses: distinction between project, programme, plan and decide whether EIA or SEA is needed; determining the content of SEA
Ireland	<p>Yes. Limited. Voluntarily or European demand</p> <p>Scope: land-use development plans, waste management plans, regional development plans, application for Structural Funds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: will be integrated and will build into existing planning systems and decision-making structures • weaknesses: nothing to highlight
Italy	<p>Yes. Limited. Voluntarily</p> <p>Scope: land-use plans, transports and water development plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: good basis for discussion • weaknesses: nothing to highlight
Luxembourg	no information available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: no information available • weaknesses: no information available

The Netherlands	<p>Yes. Extensive, EIA Act and Environmental Test procedures</p> <p>Scope: regulations, land use and sectoral planning and programmes (waste management, energy, transports,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: positive response • weaknesses: need for flexibility between policy and planning processes; lack of experience may make implementation more difficult
Norway	<p>Yes. Limited. Administrative Order for SEA</p> <p>Scope: transport and energy sectoral plans and programmes, land-use planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: positive step towards integration of environmental concerns in decision-making; proposed procedure; open and transparent decision-making and public participation • weaknesses: scope: hard to define exactly the nature of plans and programmes to cover, misses to cover policies
Portugal	<p>Yes. Limited. Voluntarily or European demand</p> <p>Scope: proposal for Structural Funds; new international airport programme, forestry sustainable development plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: no information available • weaknesses: no information available
Sweden	<p>Yes. Limited. Various parts of Swedish legislation</p> <p>Scope: traffic and energy sectoral planning, forestry, housing and water management planning, physical municipal planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: clear demand to use the tool on levels that are needing it • weaknesses: looks too much like the project Directive
Spain	<p>Yes. Limited. Voluntarily</p> <p>Scope: regional and town planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: no difficulty in assuming the Directive • weaknesses: no information available
United Kingdom	<p>Yes. Extensive. Voluntarily, based on government guidance issued in 1991, 1993 and 1998</p> <p>Scope: new policy proposals at government level, regional and sectoral planning, municipal development plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefits: forces introduction of SEA where it does not exist or is too limited, laying down a standard requirement; would help to correct limitations of project EIA and recognises the need to consult the public and make information on assessments available • weaknesses: inadequate scope, too prescriptive, procedural requirements too complex, and it does not relate environmental assessment to sustainable development