

Ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Holger **KRAHMER** (ALDE, DE) amending, at 2nd reading of the codecision procedure, the Council's common position adopting a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe.

The committee reinstated a certain number of amendments from the first reading which were not accepted by the Council in its common position:

Smallest particles (PM2.5): the Committee adopted amendments related to PM2.5 and the review clause and called to maintain the more stringent target and limit value of 20 µg/m³ in 2010 instead of 25 µg/m³. Although ambitious, this value should be legally binding and will likely be attained in most parts of Europe by 2015.

Largest particles (PM10): the committee suggested reducing the limit values of PM10 to 33 µg/m³ on average/year from 1 January 2010, although the Council proposed maintaining 40 µg/m³ without setting a date. For daily limits of the same particles, that is 50 µg/m³, should not to be exceeded more than 35 times a calendar year according to the Council, the Parliament is in line with the common position.

Postponing deadlines and exemptions: where, in a given zone or agglomeration, conformity with the limit values for PM10 as specified in Annex XI cannot be achieved because of site-specific dispersion characteristics, adverse climatic conditions or transboundary contributions, Member States shall be exempt from the obligation to apply those limit values (during a period of 3 years from the entry into force of the Directive) provided that specific conditions are fulfilled and that the Member State shows that all appropriate measures have been taken at national, regional and local level to meet the deadlines.

The committee calls on the Member States to postpone the deadlines for the limit values for PM10 and PM2.5 by an additional period of 2 years for a particular zone or agglomeration when the air quality plan demonstrates that the limit values cannot be met, if the Member State shows that all appropriate measures have been taken at national, regional and local level to meet the deadlines.

Air quality plans: in the event of exceedances of those limit values for which the attainment deadline has already expired, the air quality plan shall set out appropriate measures, and may additionally include measures to specifically protect children's health, so that the exceedance period can be kept as short as possible. These actions plans also include specific actions to protect sensitive populations. The Commission is invited to specifically publish examples of best practices for the protection of sensitive populations, including children, within those action plans.

Situation of sampling points (Annex III): the committee reintroduced an amendment from first reading which stipulates that in certain places within a Member State which are not relevant for the exposure of the population there is no need to assess the limit values. These include places where the general public is not directly or indirectly exposed for a significant period.

Measures relating to emission sources: the committee has introduced a new annex XVIa which states that the 2 years following the entry into force of the Directive, the Commission shall submit proposals for binding EU legal provisions dealing with pollution sources and being concerned with stricter emission limit values. These proposals shall deal with the following sectors and emitters, in which emissions of pollutants must be reduced: i) standards for all relevant stationary installations which emit pollutants, for

example inclusion of combustion plants from 20 to 50 Megawatts in Directive 96/61/EC; ii) standards for motorised vehicles or craft of all sizes and classes travelling by land, air and sea; e.g. EURO VI for heavy vehicles, measures coordinated at Community level to encourage or oblige (inland)ship owners to reduce emissions, or agreements on emissions from ships' engines under the auspices of IMO; iii) new standards for domestic heating installations; iv) engines and construction machines; v) agriculture (inter alia fertilisation and livestock breeding).

Every 5 years, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council a progress report on the measures and their implementation in the Member States.

Review: the Commission is asked to ascertain whether it is sufficient to continue to set limit values for PM10 or whether these should be replaced with limit values for PM2.5.

Lastly, various amendments on technical provisions, endorsed by the European Parliament in first reading, have been retabled such as on mandatory modelling techniques; on the uniform application of the criteria for selecting sampling points; the diffusion of information to all stakeholders and the date for Member States to comply with the directive (1 year after the date of entry into force as opposed to 2 years proposed by the Council).