

Air pollution: application of emission stages to narrow-track tractors

2011/0002(COD) - 13/01/2011 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to ensure the functioning of the internal market by requiring agricultural tractors to comply with harmonised environmental exhaust provisions.

PROPOSED ACT: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: Directive 2000/25/EC regulates exhaust emissions from engines installed in agricultural or forestry tractors. The stage of emission limits currently applicable for type approval of the majority of compression ignition engines is referred to as Stage IIIA.

The Directive provides that those limits will be replaced by the more stringent Stage IIIB limits, entering into force progressively as of 1st January 2010 as regards the type approval and as of 1st January 2011 with regard to the placing on the market of those engines.

Directive 2004/26/EC amending Directive 97/68/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to measures against the emission of gaseous and particulate pollutants from internal combustion engines to be installed in non-road mobile machinery, provides that the Commission shall consider the available technology, including the cost-benefit, with a view to confirming stage IIIB and IV limit values and evaluating the possible need for additional flexibilities, exemptions or later introduction dates for certain types of equipment or engines and taking into account engines installed in non-road mobile machinery used in seasonal applications. Directive 2000/25/EC provides for a review clause in order to take into account the specificities of tractors of categories T2, T4.1 and C.2 (called narrow-track tractors, maximum width less than 1.15 m).

Directive 97/68/EC was the subject of several technical studies. As a result of these technical studies carried out in 2007, 2009 and 2010, it was established that it is not technically feasible for tractors classified within the categories T2, C2 and T4.1 to meet the requirements of stages IIIB and IV already at the dates in the Directive.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the Commission undertook a formal impact assessment in 2010, based on the previously mentioned technical studies and taking into account recent technological developments. The conclusion was that technical solutions are likely to be feasible, although not in the timeframe set in current legislation. A delay of 3 years for Stage IIIB and Stage IV requirements was assessed as the preferred option.

LEGAL BASE: Article 114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: in order to prevent Union legislation from prescribing technical requirements which cannot be met yet and in order to prevent that tractors of categories T2, C2 and T4.1. can no longer be type-approved and placed on the market or put into service, the Commission proposes that the dates given in Article 4 of Directive 2000/25/EC for type approval and initial entry into service of Stages IIIB and IV shall be delayed by three years for tractors of categories T2, C2 and T4.1.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the proposal has no implication for the Union budget.