

Air quality: provisions for tractors placed on the market under the flexibility scheme

2010/0301(COD) - 23/06/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 402 votes to 218, with 11 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2000/25/EC as regards the provisions for tractors placed on the market under the flexibility scheme.

Parliament adopted its position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure.

The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of a compromise negotiated between the European Parliament and the Council.

A definition of “**flexibility scheme**” has been introduced in the proposal: it shall mean the exemption procedure by means of which a Member State permits the placing on the market and entry into service of a limited number of tractors in accordance with the requirements of the Directive.

A new provision stipulates that by way of derogation, Member States shall provide that, at the request of the tractor manufacturer, and on condition that the approval authority has granted the relevant permit for placing on the market in accordance with the procedures laid down in Annex IV, a limited number of tractors fitted with engines approved in accordance with the requirements of the emission limits stage immediately preceding the applicable one may enter into service.

The flexibility scheme shall begin when a **given stage** becomes applicable and shall have the same duration as the stage itself. The flexibility scheme shall, however, be restricted to the duration of Stage III B or to three years where no subsequent stage exists.

The resolution highlights the following points:

- the current global financial and economic crisis or any economic downturn should not lead to a lowering of environmental standards. This revision of Directive 2000/25/EC should therefore be considered to be exceptional. Furthermore, investments in environmentally friendly technologies are important for the promotion of future growth, jobs and health security;
- during Stage III B, the number of tractors that are placed on the market and that enter into service should, in each engine category, not exceed 40% of the number of tractors placed on the market by the tractor manufacturer in that engine category. The alternative option of allowing a fixed number of tractors to be placed on the market and to enter into service under the flexibility scheme should be adapted accordingly;
- manufacturers of tractors falling within the scope of this Directive should benefit from European financial support programmes or any relevant support programmes provided by Member States. Those support programmes may favour projects employing the best available technologies with the highest emission standards;
- current emission limits should be made more stringent, including with respect to ultrafine black carbon particles notably by introducing particulate number limits in future legislation if this is justified by relevant impact assessments.