

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

2010/0301(COD) - 14/09/2011 - Final act

PURPOSE: to contribute to the smooth functioning of the internal market for tractors while protecting human health and the environment.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Directive 2011/72/EU 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.

CONTENT: the adoption of the new directive which amends Directive 2000/25/EC follows an agreement at first reading with the European Parliament.

Directive 2000/25/EC provided that the emission limits applicable in 2010 for type approval of the majority of compression ignition engines, referred to as Stage III A, were to be replaced by the more stringent Stage III B limits, entering into force progressively as from 1 January 2011 with regard to the placing on the market, and from 1 January 2010 as regards the type-approval for those engines. Stage IV, providing for emission limits more stringent than Stage III B, will enter into force progressively as of 1 January 2013 as regards the type-approval for those engines and as of 1 January 2014 with regard to the placing on the market. **The transition to Stage III B involves a step change in technology** requiring significant implementation costs for re-designing the engines and for developing advanced technical solutions.

Directive 2000/25/EC provides for **a flexibility scheme** to allow tractor manufacturers to purchase, during a given stage, a limited number of engines that do not comply with emission limits applicable during that stage.

The new Directive aims to **allow manufacturers of tractors to adapt to the new technological requirements relating to engines** in order to comply with exhaust emission limits, by strengthening the flexibility mechanism provided for in Directive 2000/25/EC.

A new provision on the flexibility scheme stipulates that, **by 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 Directive states that 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.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 13/10/2011.

TRANSPOSITION: 24/09/2011.

