

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

1996/0163(COD) - 23/03/2012 - Follow-up document

In accordance with the requirements of Directive 98/70/EC the Commission presents its **eighth annual report** covering the year 2009 on the quality of petrol and diesel fuel used for road transport in the European Union. The report summarises Member States' submissions on the quality of petrol and diesel, as well as the volumes sold, for the year 2009. All Member States except Luxembourg, which had failed to deliver a report in the previous two years, submitted a full report for 2009. Luxembourg has provided fuel sales data, but carried out no sampling in 2009, meaning that its report is incomplete. In 2010 it has been reported that Luxembourg has started to sample.

The timeliness of the submission of reports has improved considerably in 2009. Fourteen Member States submitted their 2009 report before the annual deadline, of the remaining thirteen reports submitted, all except two were received less than one month after the reporting deadline.

Fuel quality monitoring in 2009 showed that the specifications for petrol and diesel laid down in Directive 98/70/EC are in general met and again **few exceedances were identified**. For petrol the main parameters where exceedances were identified were research/motor octane number (RON/MON), summer vapour pressure, distillation/evaporation at 100/150°C4 and the maximum sulphur content. For diesel the main parameters where exceedances were identified were sulphur content, distillation 95% point and cetane number.

As exceedances are relatively rare and most Member States take action to remove non-compliant fuel from sale, the Commission is not aware of any negative repercussions on vehicle emissions or engine functioning due to these exceedances. However, the Commission urges Member States to continue to take action to ensure full compliance so that such problems do not arise in the future. The Commission will continue monitoring compliance with the fuel quality requirements laid down in the Directive.

Low sulphur content helps reduce air pollution and the introduction of new engine technology. Under Directive 2003/17/EC, a new specification for automotive road fuels came into force on 1 January 2009 that limits the sulphur content of all automotive road fuels in the EU to 10 ppm (sulphur-free fuels). This represents the first year of reporting since this conversion and, accordingly, the average sulphur content fell in 2009 and is substantially below the level reported in 2004.

National monitoring systems: Commission Decision 2002/159/EC and European Standard EN 14274, have enhanced the usefulness of the information and facilitated analysis of EU fuel trends. The quality of the monitoring systems' design, compliance with limit values and information provided in report submissions is continuing to improve. However, there are still a few key areas for improvement, summarised as follows:

- Member States are encouraged to continue to improve the timeliness of the submissions;
- several Member States do not fulfil sufficient sampling numbers for all fuels or are not sampling in sufficient numbers at refuelling stations (as opposed to depot/refinery) to meet with the requirements of European Standard EN 14274. Any such samples should be additional to the minimum number of samples required at refuelling stations;
- where Member States use their own national systems, they should be fully described in order to verify whether they comply with the European Standard. This description should show the monitoring system's equivalency in statistical confidence to EN 14274.

Lastly, Member State reports are assessed according to the appropriate seasonal periods to ensure comparability for EU-wide reporting. Where a Member State has chosen to utilise a different seasonal period to that specified, appropriate information should be provided in the national annex within the Fuel Quality Monitoring report.