

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

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In accordance with the requirements of Directive 98/70/EC, the Commission presents its 9th annual report on the Quality of petrol and diesel fuel used for road transport in the European Union, covering the year 2010.

The monitoring of fuel quality in 2010 shows that the specifications for petrol and diesel laid down in Directive 98/70/EC are in **general met** and **very few exceedances** were identified.

The report adds that low sulphur content helps reduce air pollution and the introduction of new engine technology. A new specification for automotive road fuels came into force on 1 January 2009, which limits the sulphur content of all automotive road fuels in the EU to 10 ppm (sulphur-free fuels). This represents the second year of reporting since this requirement came into force and the average sulphur continued below this level in 2010,

Petrol: the parameters found to be out of specification most frequently within the Union in 2010 were:

- summer vapour pressure was exceeded 215 times in 2010 or 1.85% of the total samples. However it is becoming apparent that many exceedances are the result of transitional fuels when suppliers swap the summer specification fuel for winter specification fuels and vice versa;
- RON/ MON samples found to be out of specification in 2010 totalled 59 samples or 0.5 % of the total samples;
- the sulphur content maximum of 10ppm was exceeded in 34 samples or 0.29 % of the total samples, with the highest sample value being 45.9 mg/kg. However the average sulphur content for all Member States remains below the mandatory limit of 10ppm at 5.8 ppm.

Diesel: for diesel the main parameters where exceedances were identified were sulphur content, distillation 95% point and cetane number.

- in spite of the average EU sulphur content remaining below the mandatory 10ppm limit - at 6.5 ppm,- there were 169 samples or 1.26 % of the total samples found to be non-compliant;
- a total of 38 samples exceeded distillation limits in 2010;
- in total, 4 samples tested for cetane number were found to be out of specification.

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 and to ensure that report are submitted to the Commission within the requested deadlines.

The progressive adoption of standard EN 14274 by Member States is leading to greater consistency in the data available for assessment of the various fuel quality parameters and Member States have been making efforts to improve their understanding of reporting requirements.

However, the report encourages Member States to continue to improve the timeliness of the submissions. It adds that several Member States do not complete sufficient sampling for all fuels or are not sampling sufficiently at service stations (as opposed to depot/refinery) to meet the requirements of EN 14274. Where Member States use their own national monitoring systems, such systems should be fully described in order to be able to verify whether they comply with the European Standard.