

Limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from medium combustion plants

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Ministers held a **policy debate** on two legislative proposals (directives on medium-size combustion plants and on [national emission ceilings](#)) which are part of the **Clean Air Programme for Europe**.

The aim of the programme is to further reduce the impacts of harmful emissions from industry, transport, energy plants and agriculture on human health and the environment. It sets out actions to achieve full compliance with existing air quality standards by 2020, and common EU health and environmental targets for the period up to 2030.

The debate focused on the main political issues, in particular on matters related to the scope such as flexibility and exemptions.

The question of whether the **exemptions** and the implementation timeline already included in the proposal provide enough flexibility to Member States and at the same time preserve the environmental integrity of the proposal.

It is appropriate to examine: (i) if the proposed categorization of the medium size plants are appropriate for both existing and new plants in relation to the proposed emission limit values and; (ii) are the pollutants included in the scope of the MCP Directive adequate; (iii) should there be a more targeted approach to plants within certain capacity categories.

As regards medium-sized combustion plants, **there was much support** for the proposal which will be crucial to achieve compliance with air quality standards. However, several delegations requested **added flexibilities** for specific situations and expressed concerns for small combustion plants and the emission limit values proposed.

With regard to **national emission ceilings**, many delegations supported the step-by-step approach and the coverage of all economic sectors, but concerns were expressed on the **level of ambition**, particularly as regards the ceilings to be reached by 2030.

Lastly, several delegations said that further examination of the impacts of the proposed emission ceilings should be carried out, especially impacts on the agricultural sector.