

# Reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels. Codification

2014/0216(COD) - 09/03/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 665 votes to 24, with 5 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council relating to a reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels (codified text).

Parliament adopted its position at first reading, taking over the Commission proposal. This proposal in question aims to **codify Council Directive 1999/32/EC** which has been substantially amended several times. The proposal contains a straightforward codification of the existing texts without any change in their substance.

The proposed Directive seeks to **reduce the emissions of sulphur dioxide** resulting from the combustion of certain types of liquid fuels and thereby to reduce the harmful effects of such emissions on man and the environment. It lays down the maximum permitted sulphur content of heavy fuel oil, gas oil, marine gas oil and marine diesel oil used in the Union.

With regard to the limit on the sulphur content of heavy fuel oil, the proposal provides for: (i) derogations in Member States and regions where the environmental conditions allow; (ii) derogations for their use in combustion plants which comply with the emission limit values laid down in Directive 2001/80/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, or in Annex V to Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.

To recall, the Union and the individual Member States are Contracting Parties to the UN-ECE Convention of 13 November 1979 on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution. The second UN-ECE Protocol on transboundary pollution by sulphur dioxide stipulates that the Contracting Parties should reduce sulphur dioxide emissions in line with or beyond the 30 % reduction specified in the first Protocol.

In 2008, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) adopted a resolution to amend Annex VI to the Protocol of 1997 to amend the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL), containing regulations for the prevention of air pollution from ships.

The revised Annex VI to MARPOL introduces, *inter alia*, stricter sulphur limits for marine fuel in SOx Emission Control Areas (1,00 % as of 1 July 2010 and 0,10 % as of 1 January 2015) as well as in sea areas outside SOx Emission Control Areas (3,50 % as of 1 January 2012 and, in principle, 0,50 % as of 1 January 2020).

Most Member States are obliged, in accordance with their international commitments, to require ships to use fuel with a **maximum sulphur content of 1,00 %** in SOx Emission Control Areas as of 1 July 2010.

In order to ensure coherence with international law as well as to secure proper enforcement of new globally established sulphur standards in the Union, the codified Directive should be in line with the revised Annex VI to MARPOL.