

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

1996/0163(COD) - 07/10/1997 - Council position

The common position differs from the Commission proposal on a number of points seeking on the one hand to achieve a further improvement in fuel quality and provide clear long term indications for the profession and on the other hand take better account of specific situations at national level. The principal amendments to the modification concern the following: - Definitions: diesel fuels intended for non-road mobile machinery and agricultural tractors are not covered by the directive; - Leaded petrol: the date of expiry of the derogation concerning the final ban was extended to 1 January 2005 instead of 2002. A further condition was added regarding the derogation, that is to say the favourable environmental impact criterion taking account for example of different climatic situations. In addition, Member States may authorize the marketing of small quantities of leaded petrol for collectors' vehicles. - Sulphur content of unleaded petrol: the Council had proposed a derogation until 1 January 2003, seeking to achieve a compromise regarding a sulphur content of 100 mg/kg for unleaded petrol; - Specific requirements for petrol and diesel from 1 January 2000: the Council has reduced benzene content from 2% to 1% and sulphur content from 200 mg/kg to 150 mg/kg. The aromatic compound content is reduced from 45% to 42%. The common position also introduces indicative environmental specifications applicable to fuel for the year 2005. These specifications concern the sulphur and aromatic compound content of petrol and the sulphur content of diesel. The Commission will table a proposal by 30 June 1999 at the latest confirming, amending or adding to these specifications. The common position also provides: - that the improvement in the quality of diesel fuel required from the year 2005 can be progressively introduced on the market; - that future Commission proposal would also include environmental specifications concerning substitute fuels such as pressurized natural gas, liquid petroleum gas and biofuels. It should also be noted that the advisory committee procedure has been replaced with a III B procedure. Finally, transitional measures have been laid down for Austria.