Air pollution: measures to be taken against emission of gaseous pollutants from internal combustion engines

1995/0209(COD) - 20/01/1997 - Council position

On the basis of recent research carried out in the context of the Auto-Oil-Programme the common position modifies the initial proposal in terms of strengthening environmental protection through the introduction of more severe emission limit values for nitrogen oxides (NOx) in stage II. It also takes into account the need to introduce into the Community standards which are more compatible with the standards implemented (or under implementation) in third countries which are important trading partners. In the same spirit it introduces a new article providing for a possible further reduction of emission limit values to be decided upon by the end of the year 2000, on the basis of technical and environmental considerations. The deadline demanded by the national administrations for the implementation of the directive necessitated changes in the date for entry into force. However, the common position makes provision for a tight time schedule for national implementation allowing for the original timetable for the implementation of Stage II to remain unchanged despite the fact that the period of stability between Stage I and Stage II has thus been shortened. The main changes to the text cover the following areas: - future initiative to extend the scope of the Directive to gasoline engines; - the need for equivalent legislation on emissions from agricultural and forestry tractor engines; - the willingness to harmonize considerably the emission standards for compression ignition engines in order to strengthen them; - consolidation of the definition of non-road mobile machinery which includes transportable industrial equipment; - clarification that the test engine for type-approval has to be provided by the applicant; - time span for obligatory record keeping by the manufacturers with respect to engines produced in compliance with the Directive reduced from 30 to 20 years; - acceptance of type-approvals according to Directive 88/77/EEC as being equivalent to the proposed Directive has been restricted to Stage I. Stage II, as amended by the common position, is more stringent than Stage B of Directive 88/77/EEC; - inclusion of a provision in order to prevent possible refusals of placing on the market of engines which meet the requirements of the Directive. It should be noted that the article setting out the conditions for the granting of possible economic instruments and tax incentives has been deleted. With regard to the timetable, the date for initial acceptance of type approvals by Member States has changed from 31 December 1996 to 31 December 1997.The dates for the obligatory compliance of category A and B engines at the stage of type-approval were changed accordingly to 31 December 1997. In addition the dates for the obligatory compliance of category A, B and C engines at the stage of placing on the market had to be adapted in order to provide sufficient time to carry out the necessary approval testing and certification. The granting of a two year postponement of the obligatory compliance date related to the placing on the market of engines built prior to this date has been made optional. The common position also provides clarification of the responsibility of type-approval authorities in cases of engines covered by this Directive for the first time. It provides for the Commission to be assisted by the committee established under Directive 92/53/EEC relating to the type-approval of motor vehicles and their trailers instead of the Committee established in accordance with the Directive on ambient air quality assessment and management. There is a change of the Committee procedure from I to II(b). Lastly, there is provision for a new proposal to be prepared by the end of 1999 reviewing the standards for compression ignition engines (Stage III).