Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

1996/0163(COD) - 29/06/1998

A package of anti-pollution measures - informally known as the Auto/Oil Programme - which is intended to clean up road transport in Europe from the start of the next millennium got the green light from the joint Parliament/Council Conciliation Committee. Under the agreement Parliament achieved its major objective of making fuel quality standards and pollution emission limits mandatory for both 2000 and 2005 (Council had wanted to have only indicative arrangements for 2005). In exchange, it accepted the less stringent figures proposed by the Council for the specifications themselves (although these were a considerable improvement on the figures originally put forward by the Commission). Rejecting the Commission's original "cost-effective" approach as inadequate, in its negotiations with the Council Parliament also argued successfully that health and environmental benefits must be taken into account when assessing the cost of measures to improve air quality. The proposal for a directive (amending Council Directive 93/12/EEC) to improve the quality of petrol and diesel fuels in Europe. Parliament's rapporteur is Ms Heidi HAUTALA (Greens, Fin); under last night's agreement, Parliament obtained the phasing out, from 2000 onwards, of the most polluting types of petrol and diesel and the simultaneous phasing in of cleaner fuels to replace them. The Auto/Oil Programme is a collaborative venture between the Commission and the motor and oil industries which was launched four years ago when Parliament and the Council asked the Commission to devise a strategy to reduce road vehicle emissions with the aim of improving air quality through legislation. The programme is to continue but will now concentrate on achieving the mandatory standards agreed for 2005 and on how to adapt those standards after that date.