

Energy: use of biofuels for road transport

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The Council examined the proposal for a Directive on the promotion of the use of biofuels for transport. Following the discussion, the President, pending the European Parliament's Opinion, noted broad agreement on a Presidency compromise text concerning the proposal. He asked the Permanent Representatives Committee to examine the European Parliament's opinion as soon as it was available so that the Council could adopt a common position at a forthcoming meeting. The main aspects of the compromise are as follows: - reference values are set for the proportion of the market taken up by biofuels in relation to all fuels sold for transport purposes: for the first stage, this proportion amounts to 2% to be reached by 31 December 2005, while for the second stage it amounts to 5,75% to be reached by 31 December 2010; - Member States set national indicative targets for the minimum proportion of biofuels placed on the market; - these targets may be differentiated in relation to the reference values; - this two-stage approach is supplemented by a review clause, which is based on Commission reports and information from Member States and may lead to an adjustment in the system of targets in 2007 or later. The dossier is linked to the proposal to enable Member States to apply a reduced rate of excise duties on biofuels, which was submitted by the Commission at the same time and will be on the agenda for the Economic and Financial Affairs Council which precedes the European Council in Seville on 21 and 22 June.