

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

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PREVIOUS COMMUNITY LEGISLATION: In order to reduce SO₂ emissions in Member States at source, the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels has been lowered gradually by a series of directives, the aim being to improve the quality of air by cutting its sulphur content. -Directive 75/716/EEC (OJ L 307, 27.11.1975, p. 22): The setting of sulphur content (except for power stations and sea-going vessels) in two stages: for type A gas oil (sensitive zones): 0.5% by weight as from 1 October 1976, 0.3% by weight as from 1 October 1980; for type B gas oil (non-sensitive zones): 0.8% by weight as from 1 October 1976, 0.5% by weight as from 1 October 1980; -Directive 87/219/EEC (OJ L 91, 3.4.1987, p. 19): Reduction of sulphur content (also in the case of power stations) to 0.3% by weight as from 1 January 1989 in all zones except for those in which special measures are required pursuant to Directive 80/779/EEC to protect the environment, monuments or human health (0.2% by weight); -Directive 93/12/EEC (OJ L 74, 27.3.1993, p. 81): uniform limit value not exceeding 0.2% by weight in the case of light gas oil (fuel oil, bunker fuel for sea-going vessels, petrol) and gasoil for diesel engines (diesel fuel). Derogation for Greece up to 30 September 1999, by which it may authorize marketing of gas oil for marine use with a sulphur content in excess of 0.2% by weight. A second reduction in the sulphur content of diesel fuel, to no more than 0.05% by weight as from 1 October 1996, is also laid down. This two-stage proposal gives the sectors of industry concerned sufficient time to make the necessary technical adjustments. -Directive 93/12/EEC, however, also stipulates that the Commission must submit a further proposal prescribing a lower limit for sulphur content by 1 October 1999 and setting new limit values for the sulphur content of aviation kerosene. The Council was to decide on this matter by 31 July 1994 at the latest. **PREVIOUS POSITION OF EP:** As regards the adoption of directive 93/12/EEC relating to the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels, Parliament recommended a further reduction in the sulphur content of gas oil (OJ C 94, 13.4.1992, p. 209 and OJ C 337, 21.12.1992) and that the deadlines proposed by the Commission be brought forward. Parliament also recommended a ban on the marketing in the Member States of gas oils with a sulphur content exceeding 0.2% by weight. **SITUATION IN THE MEMBER STATES:** -Directive 87/219/EEC entered into force on 1 January 1989. At present, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands lay down a limit value of 0.2% by weight as regards the sulphur content of gas oil, whilst the other seven Member States lay down a limit value of 0.3% by weight. -Directive 93/12/EEC: Only Luxembourg has notified implementing measures.