Air pollution: emissions from motor vehicles, Auto-oil programme (amend. Directive 70/220 /EEC)

1996/0164A(COD) - 24/04/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Committee supports the aim of improving air quality which these draft directives seek to achieve. The Committee also believes that such measures need to be supported by others in areas such as building up public transport and improving traffic management. The Committee urges the Commission to support the automobile manufacturing industry under the Framework Research Programmes and a selective fiscal approach aimed at sustainable private vehicle use, with incentives for "clean cars" and for the implementation of the Auto/Oil Programme. The Committee questions the need to set up a system of control of compliance of vehicles in use. It would therefore urge the Commission to study alternative formulas, such as a voluntary agreement in this sphere with the European car industry. The Committee considers the proposal, as presented by the Commission, to revise the fuel quality and emission limit values by 31 December 1998 to be superfluous, principally because it is necessary to wait and see the combined effect of all the measures adopted on the air quality of urban areas in Europe before assessing whether or not further measures are required. Any such further measures would have to be duly justified in cost-effectiveness terms. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Auto/Oil II Programme for the period up to 2005 is already being drawn up. The Committee agrees with the Commission on the need to have reference targets, which are scientifically and economically verifiable. It therefore urges the Commission and the industry to speed up progress on the Auto/Oil II Programme so that appropriate reference targets can be established before the year 2000. The Committee considers that tax-based environmental incentives are only acceptable if they serve to accelerate the application of stricter standards, approved at Community level, if they are calculated as a fraction of the incremental cost of complying with such measures, and if they do not lead to distortions of competition.