

Reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels

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The Committee takes the view that the directive - with its aim of reducing the sulphur content of gas oil and fuel oil - is a good starting point from which to move on to fixing higher levels of environmental protection in the future. The Committee considers that it would be a good idea to state explicitly in the recitals that the directive does not place any significant restrictions on Member States' choice of energy plan. The Committee specifically backs the derogations allowing Austria and Finland to maintain their stricter standards for the marketing of these fuels, and the derogations granted for gas oil for marine use in Greece and the Canary Islands. Given the inclusive nature of the strategy for combating acidification, the Committee does not agree with the order in which the documents are being presented by the Commission, which has put forward the present directive before revising Directive 88/609/EEC on large combustion plants. The basis for this assertion is that the individual emission limits decided for petroleum products will - indirectly - alter the criteria for reducing SO₂ emissions from "existing" large plants as defined in Directive 88/609/EEC (plants which came into service before 1987). It would consequently be more logical for such "existing" plants to be explicitly excluded from the scope of the present proposal for the time being.