

Assessment and management of environmental noise

2000/0194(COD) - 26/07/2000 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to present a proposal for a Directive relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise. **CONTENT** : the objective of this proposal is to establish a common EU framework for the assessment and management of exposure to environmental noise. Public concern about exposure to noise pollution remains high in spite of EU legislation on noise sources and legislation in some Member States and remedial actions at the local level. So far, legislation on environmental noise is divided into two major categories, namely, EU legislation on noise emission by products (cars, trucks, aircraft equipment and industrial equipment) - essentially market access laws for type testing of conformity - Member States legislation on allowable noise levels in the domestic environment. However, this legislation was seen as unsatisfactory and in view of these conclusions this proposed Directive supplies the essential elements for a more coherent and effective approach. First, it seeks to harmonise noise indicators and assessment methods for environmental noise. Noise from different sources has different dose-effect relations and this can be defined as different pollutants. Second, using these common indicators and assessment methods, it seeks to gather noise exposure information in the form of 'noise maps'. Third it aims to make this information available for the public. This exposure information will form the basis for action plans at the local level. Equally, it will form the basis for goal setting for improvement at the EU level and for the development of an EU strategy including measures. The Directive requires the Member States to indicate the limit values currently in force or under preparation in terms of the harmonised indicators. It should be noted that this proposal does not seek to set common European-wide noise limits. However, once Member States have published national limits for each pollutant and noise maps and action plans are published, both the public and authorities will be able to compare noise situations, approaches and progress. The Commission believes that this will be strong mechanism to drive future improvement.