

Atmospheric pollution: large combustion plants, limitation of emissions (amend. direct. 88/609 /EEC)

1998/0225(COD) - 24/04/2001 - Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading

On 14 March 2001, the European Parliament adopted 18 amendments. 10 amendments have been accepted by the Commission in full. The amendments accepted by the Commission relate in particular to:

- "existing" plants as defined in Directive 88/609: these may be exempt from the basic obligations concerning new emission standards if there is a commitment to the competent authority before 30 June 2004 to close the plant within 20000 operational hours from 1 January 2008; - specifying that this exemption window must end by 31 December 2012. From both an enlargement and liberalised market perspective it is desirable to have harmonised environmental standards as soon as practicable; - the deletion of Article 5.2 and Annex VIII of the Common Position respectively which has the aim of removing the alternative desulphurisation requirements that only apply to indigenous solid fuels when the emission limit values in Annex III cannot be met due to the nature of the fuel; - removing special provisions for indigenous lignite; - to include alternative measures for solid fuels where the emission limit values in Annex III.A and III.B respectively of the Common Position cannot be met due to the nature of the fuel; - tighten the emission limit values for nitrogen oxides for existing plants and in particular for plants with a capacity greater than 300 MWth; - propose to tighten emission limit values for plant that will be licensed after the Directive comes into force. The Commission can also accept some increased stringency in this case as the environmental requirements can be integrated into investment decisions and cost effective solutions can be developed; - establishing a date of 31 Dec 2007 for the application of more stringent emission limit values to new plants licensed since 1 July 1987 and covered by Article 4.1 of the Common Position. Amendments accepted in principle by the Commission seek to: - align the list of wastes used as a fuel in the Common Position with the list of wastes which are exempt from the recently adopted directive on waste incineration (2000/76/EC) thus ensuring continuous coverage between the two legislative instruments; - include emissions of heavy metals from the large combustion plant sector in the review foreseen in Article 4.7. It also seeks to include consideration of emissions from sea and air transport as well as proposals for curbing emissions from these sectors. The Commission rejected the amendments which concern in particular: - the amendment which seeks to reduce the operating time averaged over a five-year period from 2200 hours per year to 700 hours per year during which a higher emission limit value of 800 mg/Nm³ than would otherwise apply may prevail; - the amendment which proposes to tighten the emission limit values for sulphur dioxide applicable to "existing" and "new" plants.