Convention (1979) on long-range transboundary air pollution: acidification, eutrophication, ozone. Gothenburg Protocol 1999

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PURPOSE : Community accession to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-Level Ozone CONTENT : The transboundary nature of air-pollution has long been recognised. On 30 November 1999 the Executive Body to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution adopted a Protocol to help in abating acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone. The 15 Member States including the European Community are parties to the Convention. The Protocol, agreed in Gothenburg in 1999, sets ceilings on four pollutants - sulphur, oxides of nitrogen, volatile organic compounds and ammonia. The ceilings were based on scientific assessments and are to be implemented by 2010. Once the Protocol has been fully implemented, Europe's sulphur emission should be cut by a least 63%, its NOx emissions by 41%, its VOC emissions by 40% and its ammonia emissions by 17% compared to 1990. It has been estimated that once the Protocol has been implemented, the area with excessive levels of acidification in Europe, as a whole, including non-Member States, will shrink from 93 million hectares in 1990 to 15 million hectares. That excessive levels of eutrophication will fall from 165 million hectares in 1990 to 108 million hectares. The number of days with excessive ozone levels will be halved and levels of particulate matter will also fall. It is estimated that life-years lost from air pollution will be about 2,300,000 lower in 2010 than in 1990. Similarly, it is estimated that there will be approximately 47,500 fewer premature deaths on days with especially high levels of ozone and particulate matter in the air. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland have all signed the Protocol as have Canada, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. For the Protocol to enter into force 16 Parties need to ratify the agreement. So far, only Luxembourg has done so. The European Community is now seeking accession to the Protocol. This would be complementary to the Community Directive on National Emission Ceilings and Community Directive on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from large combustion plants.