

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels: level of sulphur

2001/0107(COD) - 31/10/2002 - Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading

The European Parliament adopted seven amendments. The Commission accepts 2 in full, and 1 in principle. Those accepted include the two amendments that require the Commission, in the case of petrol and diesel respectively, to develop criteria for geographic availability of 10 mg/kg fuels during the introductory period in accordance with a comitology procedure. The Commission accepts in principle the amendment relating to the need to consider the implication of bio-fuel blending and matters such as the volatility of petrol in the next review of the directive. The Commission can request that the relevant CEN standards for petrol and diesel be amended if necessary. It cannot, however, change such standards itself. The Commission does not accept the amendments reflecting Parliament's view that the sulphur content of diesel used in compression ignition engines in non-road mobile machinery should be aligned with that used in on-road applications. Specifically, one amendment requires that diesel used in off-road applications should be subject to a maximum sulphur specification of 350 mg/kg from 1 January 2005 and that the sulphur content should be same as that specified for road diesel from 1 January 2009. This view is rejected since the work on the next stage of emission standards for compression ignition engines used in non-road applications is not finalised. The required fuel quality for such standards is not yet identified. It would be premature at this point to mandate the use of fuels with a lower sulphur content in this sector. Finally, the amendment proposing an additional part recital on the introduction of fiscal incentives for cleaner fuels is rejected, since there are no subsequent provisions relating to fiscal incentives in the directive.