

Reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels

1997/0105(SYN) - 05/01/1999

The Committee adopted Heidi HAUTALA's (Greens, FIN) draft recommendation on Council's common position for a directive aimed at reducing the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels (cooperation procedure). The proposal will amend Directive 93/132/EEC. Most of the 27 amendments adopted in first reading were incorporated in the common position. The most important remaining problems related to the sometimes very long timescales for implementation. Three amendments concerning these problems were adopted unanimously. The common position laid down that the limit value of 1% for sulphur in heavy fuel oil should be implemented as from 1 January 2003. The Committee proposed to advance this date by two years to 1 January 2001. The common position also provided for a derogation permitting member states, which do not contribute significantly to acidification to authorise the use of heavy fuel oil with a sulphur content of up to 3%. The Committee proposed to limit this derogation to 2,5%. The original Commission proposal to limit the sulphur content of gas oil, including marine gas oils, to 0,2% was thought too timid. The EP went for the 0,1% limit from 1999 onwards. The common position took up the EP 0,1% proposal for gas oil, but only from 1 January 2008. According to the Committee, this date should be advanced by four years to 2004.