

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

1998/0225(COD) - 17/03/1999

An important report aimed at curtailing pollution from large combustion plants (LCPs) was adopted by an overwhelming majority in the Committee. The report, drafted by Ria OOMEN-RUIJTEN (EPP, NL), amended a Commission proposal designed to update a 1988 directive. About 2000 LCPs (defined as those with a thermal input of 50 megawatts or more) are currently in operation in the Union. A quarter of these are used to produce electricity and the rest generate power for industry (eg for the production of chemicals). LCPs, which may burn solid or liquid fuel as well as gas or biomass, give rise to air pollution within and across national borders through the emission of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. Reducing these emissions will help combat acidification, prevent the formation of ground-level ozone and improve public health by reducing respiratory problems. All new LCPs will be covered by the updated directive. The amendments adopted - some by narrow majorities - in committee tighten the emission limits proposed by the Commission, bring all existing LCPs within the scope of the legislation (including those licensed before 1987, which are currently excluded), extend the directive to cover offshore gas turbines, and require Member States to give emission information to the public. The proposal is currently covered by the cooperation procedure but will become subject to codecision once the Amsterdam Treaty comes into force this summer.