Air pollution: ozone in ambient air, emission ceilings

1999/0068(COD) - 28/05/2001

The committee adopted the report by Chris DAVIES (ELDR, UK) amending the Council's common position. It was critical of the Council for watering down the Commission's - already weak - proposal for a directive and sought to tighten it up and reinstate a number of first reading amendments which were not taken up by Council. In particular, it disagreed with the Council's amendment of the Commission proposal concerning the maximum number of days on which ozone levels could exceed WHO recommendations, and adopted an amendment restoring the Commission's original figure of 20 days, which had been increased to 25 days in the common position. It also wanted the 2010 deadline for achieving this to be made binding. In addition, it reinstated Parliament's first reading amendment introducing a specific deadline (2020) for achieving the long-term objective of reducing ozone concentrations to levels that were unlikely to be harmful. Other first reading amendments being retabled sought to tighten up the provisions requiring the Member States to disseminate information on ozone concentrations and on their short-term action plans for zones at risk of dangerously high levels. It wanted information decisions on the short-term action plans to be forwarded to the Commission annually (rather than every 3 years). In this way the content of such plans could be assessed more quickly, and it would also enable direct comparisons to be made between the performance of the Member States, as part of a process of "naming and shaming" those that were making the least effort. To stop Member States from wriggling out of their obligations, the committee also deleted phrases like "as far as possible" or "where practicable" in a number of articles.