

Ambient air quality: common strategy for assessment and management

1994/0106(SYN) - 04/07/1994 - Legislative proposal

The Council's proposal for a directive seeks to provide a Community framework for evaluating the management and quality of ambient air, while leaving it up to the Member States to take specific measures to reduce pollution levels on their territory. The pollutants concerned - 14 in total - are those already governed by Community directives (sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, black smoke, suspended particulate matter, lead, ozone), plus the following substances: carbon monoxide, cadmium, acid fallout, benzene, poly-aromatic hydrocarbons, arsenic, fluoride and nickel. More specifically, the draft text lays down the principles to be applied in order to: - harmonize the evaluation of air quality; - set objectives concerning the quality of ambient air: limit values which must be achieved within the next ten or fifteen years will be laid down, together with alert thresholds at which the population must be informed; - maintain or improve the quality of ambient air: a) Member States must take measures and draw up action plans to improve air quality where limit values are exceeded; b) the long-term limit value must be achieved by a specific deadline where levels fall between the admissible value and the long-term limit value; c) the population must be informed when alert thresholds are exceeded; - ensure that the public receives more regular reports on atmospheric pollution, to be published by the Commission on the basis of information provided by the Member States. The timetable for the implementation of the directive sets two deadlines for adopting quality objectives, evaluation criteria and measuring methods, viz. 31 December 1996 for substances already governed by directives and 31 December 1999 for other substances.