

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

1996/0163(COD) - 18/06/1996 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: on the basis of the results of the Auto-Oil programme, on which the Commission, the European petroleum industry and the European automobile industry have been cooperating for three years, the proposal for a directive seeks to improve the quality of fuels (petrol and diesel) with a view to reducing emissions from automobiles. **SUBSTANCE:** the proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive provides for: - harmonized limit values, to be applied in the year 2000, for various parameters of lead-free petrol and diesel, such as benzene, aromatics or sulphur. As from that date, only those fuels which comply with the specifications laid down by the directive will be authorized for sale on the territory of the Member States; - the gradual elimination of leaded petrol between now and 1 January 2000 (a temporary derogation may be granted by the Commission for a three-year period to Member States which can show that they are facing serious socio-economic problems); - the possibility for the Member States, in certain areas particularly badly affected by atmospheric pollution, to insist on the marketing of special fuels, having first submitted to the Commission a request for a derogation justified with reference to air quality conditions and the likely impact of the proposed measures; - the possibility for the Commission to authorize higher limit values in a Member State in the event of a sudden change in the supply of crude oil, for a period not exceeding six months; - the development of a uniform system to monitor the quality of fuels distributed on the market, with the assistance of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN). As from 2002, the Member States will submit to the Commission a summary of the results and a description of their national monitoring programmes; - a review of the new fuel specifications in late 1998 at the latest, in the light of the Community air quality objectives and the economic viability of the measures.