

# Reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels

1997/0105(SEN) - 12/03/1997 - Legislative proposal

**OBJECTIVE:** The purpose of the directive is to reduce the emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) in the European Community by limiting the sulphur content of certain types of liquid fuels (heavy fuel oils and gas oils). It forms part of a set of measures aimed at combatting acidification (acid rain) and certain atmospheric pollution problems arising from the presence of sulphur dioxide and suspended particulates.

**SUBSTANCE:** The proposal is accompanied by a Commission communication on the Community strategy to combat acidification, providing for a range of measures aimed at reducing considerably by the year 2010 the extent of the areas in the EU in which the sulphur loads are exceeded. The proposal does not cover all categories of liquid fuel. The limit values set by Directive 93/12/EEC for the sulphur content of gas oils, currently at 0.2%, will be retained. The most innovative element in the proposal is its setting of a limit value for the sulphur content of heavy fuel oils of 1% with effect from 1 January 2000. Exemptions are provided for combustion plants with low SO<sub>2</sub> emissions and regions which are little affected by air pollution. This directive does not preclude Member States from retaining or setting stricter limits, provided that they inform the Commission of their plans in advance.