Atmospheric pollution, air quality: limit values for benzene and carbon monoxide CO (direct. 96 /62/EEC)

1998/0333(COD) - 01/12/1998 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to present a proposal for a Council directive relating to limit values for benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air. CONTENT: the proposal fixes limit values including attainment dates for benzene and carbon monoxide, gives requirements for assessment of concentrations, and provides for the dissemination of information about the pollutants to the public. In preparing the ground for this proposal, account was taken of the requirements for such daughter legislation set out in the Air Quality Framework Directive. Based on the framework directive's four objectives, the objectives of the current proposal are to: - establish limit values for concentrations of benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air intended to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole; - assess concentrations of benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air on the basis of common methods and criteria; - obtain adequate information on concentrations of benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air and ensure that it is made available to the public; - maintain ambient air quality where it is good and improve it in other cases with respect to benzene and carbon monoxide. For benzene, the limit value is set at 5g/m· averaged over a calendar year with a margin of tolerance of 5g/m· (100%) on the Directive's entry into force, reducing on 1/1/2003 and every year thereafter by equal annual percentages to reach 0% by 1/1 /2010 (date of attainment). Exceptionally, extensions may be agreed for periods of up to five years for areas where it can be demonstrated that meeting the limit value for benzene by 2010 would cause severe socio-economic difficulties. For carbon monoxide, the limit value is set at 10mg/m· averaged over eight hours (on a rolling basis) with a margin of tolerance of 5mg/m· (50%) on the Directive's entry into force, reducing on 1/1/2003 and every year thereafter by equal annual percentages to reach 0% by 1/1/2005 (date of attainment). The Commission considers it inappropriate to establish alert thresholds for benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air and so has made no provision for these in its proposal. With regard to the assessment of concentrations of these two air pollutants, thresholds are established to determine the methods of assessment (continuous measurement, indicative measurement, modelling, objective assessment) to be used in an agglomeration or other zone. Provision is also made for the siting of measurement points. If information from measurement stations is the sole source of data reported to the Commission from a zone or agglomeration, a minimum number of stations is specified. However, the framework directive enables other methods to be used, even in zones and agglomerations where continuous measurement is mandatory. Where a full analysis has been carried out the number of continuous stations required depends on the overall quality of the information available. Until the CEN has completed its new harmonised standards for air quality measurement, the present proposal carries forwardthe existing reference methods for benzene and carbon monoxide. Member States are required to supply regular and up-to-date information about benzene and carbon monoxide to the public and appropriate organisations. The Commission must produce a report to Council and the European Parliament no later than 31/12/2004 on implementation of the directive and progress in understanding of the pollutants with which it deals, with particular attention to research into their effects on human health.