

Industrial pollution: reduction of emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOC)

1996/0276(SYN) - 11/03/1999 - Final act

PURPOSE: to limit emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOC) due to the use of organic solvents in certain activities and installations. **COMMUNITY MEASURE:** Council directive 1999/13/EC.

CONTENT: the directive has the objective of preventing or limiting the direct and indirect effects of VOC emissions into the environment, mainly into air, and the potential risks to human health, by providing measures and procedures to be implemented for the activities defined in Annex I of the directive, in so far as they are operated above the solvent consumption thresholds listed in the directive's Annex IIA. The directive lays down obligations to be applied to new and existing installations. As far as respect for the essential requirements is concerned, the directive provides for the possibility, under certain conditions, for Member States to allow exemptions where it is technically and economically impossible not to exceed the emission values laid down in the directive. Member States may establish national plans for the reduction of emissions resulting from the activities and industrial installations covered by the directive. The potential field of application of the national plan option is limited to existing installations. The surface cleaning and dry cleaning sectors are excluded, as are activities recognised as involving a period of risk. Furthermore, the plan must be accompanied by supporting documentation to allow the Commission to assess the objectives to be achieved and, in particular, details of the proposed mechanism for monitoring the plan's implementation. The Member States must require the operator of the installation to provide the competent authority, once a year or on request, with the necessary data to enable that authority to verify compliance with the directive. In cases of non-compliance causing immediate danger to human health, the activity must be suspended until compliance has been re-established. The Commission shall ensure that an exchange of information takes place between the Member States and the activities concerned on the use of organic substances and their potential substitutes. In particular, it shall consider their potential effects on human health (particularly occupational exposure), their potential effects on the environment and their economic consequences (costs/benefits). Every three years, the Member States must send the Commission a report containing information on the directive's implementation. On this basis, the Commission will submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the directive's implementation. **ENTRY INTO FORCE:** 29/03/1999. **DEADLINE FOR TRANSPOSITION:** April 2001.