

Reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels

1997/0105(SYN) - 26/04/1999 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to protect the environment and human health by reducing sulphur dioxide emissions throughout the European Community through a limitation of the sulphur content in certain liquid fuels (heavy fuel oils and gas oils). COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Directive No 1999/32/EC relating to a reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels and amending Directive No 93/12/EEC.

CONTENT: this directive constitutes one of the actions under the Community strategy for combating acidification. In a general way, it obliges the Member States to take all necessary steps to ensure that as from 1 January 2003 within their territory, heavy fuels are not used if their sulphur content exceeds 1.00% by mass. Derogations are, however, made in regions where air quality objectives are being met and sulphur dioxide emissions do not contribute significantly to the problem of acidification. In such cases, the use of heavy fuel oils with a sulphur content of up to 3% may be permitted. The directive also defines the sectors and categories of combustion installation which are exempted from the 1% limit on sulphur content in heavy fuel oils. It should be noted that certain liquid fuels (bunker fuel oils, aviation kerosene) are, for the time being, not covered by the directive. The directive also requires Member States to ensure that gas oils (including marine gas oils) are not used within their territory as from: - July 2000 if their sulphur content exceeds 0.20% by mass; - 1 January 2008 if their sulphur content exceeds 0.10% by mass. Derogations from the limits laid down may be allowed for the Canary Islands, the French Overseas Departments, the whole of Greece and the archipelagos of Madeira and Azores. The directive requires the Member States to verify by sampling that the sulphur content of fuels used complies with the provisions of the directive. The Commission will submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council no later than 31 December 2006. ENTRY INTO FORCE: 11 May 1999. DEADLINE FOR TRANSPOSITION: 1 July 2000.