

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

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The European Commission has published its second annual report on the quality of petrol and diesel fuel used for road transport in the EU.

Article 8 of Directive 98/70/EC requires the Commission to publish annually a report on the actual fuel quality in the different Member States. In compliance with this request this report briefly summarises Member States' submissions on the quality of petrol and diesel, as well as the volumes sold, for the year 2003. All Member States but France submitted national reports for 2003.

Monitoring of fuel quality in 2003 shows that the specifications for petrol and diesel laid down in Directive 98/70/EC were generally met. Very few violations were identified.

For petrol the main parameters of concern were research octane number (RON, 14+ samples), summer vapour pressure (DVPE, 10+ samples) and distillation - evaporation at 100°C (6+ samples).

For diesel the parameters of concern were sulphur content (5 samples), distillation 95% point (2 samples), cetane number (1 sample), density (1 sample) and PAH (1 sample). The Commission has not identified any negative repercussions on vehicle emissions or engine functioning but continues to urge Member States to take action in order to ensure full compliance.

For the abatement of air pollution and the introduction of new engine technology it is important to note that the share of less than 10 ppm and less than 50 ppm sulphur fuels increased significantly from 2001 to 2003. Overall a general trend towards lower sulphur content in petrol and diesel fuel can be identified.