

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

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In compliance with Article 8 of Directive 98/70/EC the European Commission has prepared this Report which summarises the quality of petrol and diesel, as well as the volumes sold in the Community for the year 2004. For the reporting years 2001 and 2002 please refer to the previous summaries.

The monitoring of fuel quality in 2004 shows that the specifications for petrol and diesel laid down in Directive 98/70/EC have, by and large, been met. Few violations have been identified.

For petrol the main area parameter of concern was again research octane number (RON, 34 + samples), summer vapour pressure (DVPE, 43 + samples) and distillation – evaporation at 100 degree C (17 + samples). For diesel the parameters of concern related to sulphur content (22 samples), distillation 95% (24 samples) point, cetane number (7+ samples) and density (5+ samples).

Although several Member States reported non-compliant samples, far fewer samples exceeded the limit values (and the limits of tolerance for the test methods) compared to previous years. However, both the Czech Republic and Poland reported significant numbers of samples exceeding limit values. The Commission urges the 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 < 10 ppm and 50 ppm sulphur fuels increased significantly from 2001 to 2004 for the EU-15. For the new Member States (EU-10) the sulphur content is significantly higher leading to a slight increase in average sulphur between 2003 and 2004 for the whole of the EU. However, overall, figures show a general trend towards lower sulphur content in petrol and diesel fuel.

Lastly, the fuel quality monitoring systems established at national level differ considerably and require further uniformity in order to provide transparent and comparable results. The quality of reporting has improved since Member States have been obliged to report in accordance with the new European Standard EN14274 or with systems of equivalent confidence.