

Ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe

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Pending the opinion of the European Parliament at first reading, the Council agreed on a general approach on a draft directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. The agreement was based on a Presidency compromise package, which includes several key elements:

- existing limit values are maintained without any changes;
- a binding limit value for PM2.5 in 2015 will replace a non-binding target value applicable from 2010 (25Xg/m³ for both target value and limit value); Member States have to prepare air quality plans in order to attain target and limit value;
- an exposure reduction target for PM2.5 with the aim of reducing air pollution in urban background locations; a review to be carried out by the Commission until 2013 with a view to replacing the target by a legally binding exposure reduction obligation;
- it follows the Commission's proposals and takes account of Member States' current difficulties in reaching air quality targets and allows for a time-limited extension of attainment dates for limit values under clearly defined conditions; for limit values which are already in force the possibility for postponement is limited to PM10 until three years after entry into force of this Directive.

As soon as the opinion of the European Parliament is available, the Council will be able to reach political agreement on this file.