

Thematic strategy on air pollution

2006/2060(INI) - 26/09/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Dorette **Corbey (PES, NL)**. The resolution was adopted by 563 votes in favour to 19 against with 42 abstentions. It pointed out that air pollution was a major cause of death and factor for disease in Europe. Many Member States do not meet the limit values under current air quality legislation - most problems occur in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, northern Italy, Poland and in large cities. Current measures directed at the sources of pollution are insufficient to achieve the limit values.

Setting the right ambition level to tackle air pollution: whilst Parliament welcomed the Commission's Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution, it noted with concern that the Strategy does not show how the objectives of the 6th EAP could be attained and does not include any legal requirement to reduce particulate emissions, but simply confines itself to suggesting indicative targets. It called for a strategy with more ambitious reduction targets that correspond to scenario C for VOC (volatile organic compounds), PM_{2.5} and NO_x since this would lead to greater health benefits and employment benefits, while maintaining a balanced approach between costs and benefits. The resolution outlines the precise reductions recommended.

Parliament favours the introduction of a PM₁₀ yearly limit value of 33 µg/m³ in 2010 and supports the Commission's proposal to introduce a concentration reduction of PM_{2.5}, as the PM_{2.5} part within PM₁₀ is the most harmful to health. It calls for the introduction of a PM_{2.5} target value of 20 µg/m³ in 2010, turning into a limit value in 2015, and a long-term target value for PM_{2.5} of 10 µg/m³. Member States that can show that they have taken all feasible measures should be granted more time to reach the limit and target values. Parliament also advocates greater uniformity of the methods of measurement and calculation used by different Member States for fine particulate concentrations. Inter alia, the correction factors should be applied properly. The Commission's proposal to introduce a target exposure reduction of 20% for PM_{2.5} in 2020 compared to the average exposure index of 2010 was approved. However, Parliament called for differentiated reduction targets, which take account of the different initial levels of the Member States and the measures taken previously, with particular reference to the greater reduction potential of Member States where the initial exposure level is high.

Sector-based measures: Parliament called upon the Commission and Member States to take the necessary measures as soon as possible to cut emissions in the various sectors that contribute to air pollution, in which connection particular priority should be assigned to those sectors which have not previously been regulated and where further emission reductions can be achieved at lower cost. It wanted to see a proposal for revision of the National Emission Ceilings Directive and asked for specified urgent measures to cut emissions from the shipping sector. Parliament also noted that, while agriculture is one of the major sources of air pollution caused by ammonia, there are few obligations on that sector to reduce emissions, and it made some suggestions on this. It also made recommendations on reduction of emissions from industrial sources, domestic sources, including standards on heating equipment, and transport systems.