

# Recreational craft industry: exhaust and noise emissions from boat engines (amend. Directive 94/25/EC)

2000/0262(COD) - 11/06/2007 - Follow-up document

Requirements for the design and construction of recreation craft are set out in the Recreational and Craft Directive (RCD), as amended in 2003. The 2003 amendment sets out harmonised limits for exhaust and noise emission. Under the terms of the Directive the Commission is required to submit a report, by end 2006, considering whether or not firstly, to further improve the environmental characteristics of engines and secondly, to consider the need to revise the boat design categories. The following points require particular attention: the need to further reduce emissions of air pollutants and noise; the possible benefits of a system for “in-use compliance”; cost efficient techniques for controlling emissions; reducing evaporation and fuel spillage; international standards for exhaust and noise emissions; and the possible simplification of the conformity assessment procedures.

In line with the general objectives of the Better Regulation Action Plan and the Community’s guidelines on Impact Assessments, the report seeks to identify the most suitable policy options prior to submitting legislative proposals. Before preparing this Communications the Commission undertook: a stocktaking study; an impact assessment study; a series of stakeholder consultations; and dialogue within EU-US Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue.

**Reducing emissions further:** based on the stocktaking study, the Commission concludes that the recreational boating sector does not contribute significantly to overall air pollution. The study did, however, identify areas for improvement. For example, changing from two-stroke technology to direct injection and four-stroke technology. Any changes would, however have a social impact in terms of lost jobs (13-15 jobs lost for each kiloton annual pollution reduction). On the other hand, from a monetary valuation point of view, the damage avoided by reducing emissions could amount to between EUR 2500 and EUR 8200 for each ton of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions avoided per year and between EUR 13 000 and EUR 51 000 for each ton of PT emissions avoided per year. The figures suggest that compliance cost for emission reduction does not outweigh the monetary environmental benefits – and as such should be an incentive to strive for higher emission reductions.

To achieve further emission reductions, the Commission first intends to consider the technology and emission rules applied in other parts of the world and the US in particular. Any new measure would have to accompanied with provisions that provide an optimum balance between maximum emission reductions and minimal social costs.

More time and study is needed to fully asses the impact of minimising the effect of motorised recreation craft on climate change. The effect of such a policy on SME’s would also have to be taken into account. The Commission, therefore, proposes that it will prepare a complementary impact assessment study in close consultation with all stakeholders and report back to the European Parliament and Council at a later stage, with a view to establishing whether proposing legislative measures is appropriate.

**Reducing noise emissions further:** given that it is not always technologically feasible to reduce noise emissions further, the study concludes that noise abatement in environmentally sensitive areas should be achieved by other means – such as operational measures regulating the use of such craft.

**A system for “in-use compliance”:** the “in-use compliance” system would be used to verify the durability of an engine. However, the report concludes that in view of the limited environmental benefits of such a system and in view of the technical and logistical difficulties associated with it, it would not be appropriate to submit a legislative proposal for recreational craft.

**Cost efficient techniques for controlling emissions:** emission control technology that goes beyond the calibration of existing engine components may be possible – but at a considerable cost. After-treatment technology, in particular, using oxidation catalysts is being developed and tested for its reliability. It may prove to be an effective and efficient technique to maximise the emission reduction potential of marine recreational craft.

**Reducing evaporation and fuel spillage:** fuel spillage occurs mainly when crafts are being refuelled with jerry-cans. This problem has to be addressed locally and in line with the subsidiary principle. The Commission, therefore, concludes that it is up to the Member States to decide on operational measures, if needed, to reduce pollution caused by spillage.

**Agreeing international standards for exhaust and noise emissions:** substantial progress has been made on international standards for noise emission testing based on the EU funded “Soundboat” research projects. This will allow for an alternative and more cost effective methodology for noise emission compliance testing within the context of ISO standard 14509. As this standard has already been referred to in the RCD, there is no need for further legislation.

**Simplification of conformity assessment procedures:** the Commission is of the view that simplifying the system of conformity assessment procedures should be dealt with in a wider context and should await the outcome of the inter-institutional discussions on the Commission proposal to review the principles governing the New Approach legislation.

**Boat design categories:** as far as revising the criteria of boat design is concerned the report concludes that there is no strong evidence to suggest that the overall safety of recreational craft needs to be improved through changing current categories or by adding new ones.

**Conclusion:** the Commission states that it intends to explore further the possibility of maximising the potential to reduce recreational craft emissions further still. This requires an impact assessment on the application of the most stringent, technology driven emission limits for recreational craft engines and what impact this would have, not only on the climate, but on the competitiveness of European industry as well. Depending on the results of this assessment the Commission may consider the tabling of appropriate proposals at a later stage.