Basic information

2022/0347(COD) COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Directive	Procedure completed
Ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Recast **Subject** 3.70.02 Atmospheric pollution, motor vehicle pollution **Legislative priorities** Joint Declaration 2022 Joint Declaration 2023-24	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	LÓPEZ Javi (S&D)	11/01/2023
	Shadow rapporteur LINS Norbert (EPP) KARLSBRO Karin (Renew) ȘTEFĂNUȚĂ Nicolae (Greens/EFA) ZALEWSKA Anna (ECR) GANCIA Gianna (ID) MODIG Silvia (The Left)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
TRAN Transport and Tourism	TAX Vera (S&D)	19/01/2023
JURI Legal Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Committee for opinion on the recast technique	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
JURI Legal Affairs	ADAMOWICZ Magdalena (EPP)	01/01/2023

Council of the

European Union	
European Commission	Commission DG: Environment — Commissioner: SINKEVIČIUS Virginijus
European Economic and Social Committee	
European Committee of the Regions	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
26/10/2022	Legislative proposal published	COM(2022)0542	Summary
19/01/2023	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
27/06/2023	Vote in committee, 1st reading		
05/07/2023	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A9-0233/2023	Summary
12/09/2023	Debate in Parliament		
13/09/2023	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T9-0318/2023	Summary
13/09/2023	Results of vote in Parliament		
13/09/2023	Matter referred back to the committee responsible for interinstitutional negotiations		
11/03/2024	Approval in committee of the text agreed at 1st reading interinstitutional negotiations	GEDA/A/(2024)001398	
24/04/2024	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T9-0319/2024	Summary
24/04/2024	Results of vote in Parliament		
14/10/2024	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's 1st reading		
23/10/2024	Final act signed		
20/11/2024	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2022/0347(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Recast
Legislative instrument	Directive
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 113 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 192
Mandatory consultation of other institutions	European Economic and Social Committee European Committee of the Regions
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Committee dossier	ENVI/9/10502

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE742.410	23/02/2023	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE745.423	03/04/2023	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE745.424	03/04/2023	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE745.427	12/04/2023	
Committee opinion	TRAN	PE742.298	25/05/2023	
Committee draft report		PE749.886	08/06/2023	
Specific opinion	JURI	PE750.118	27/06/2023	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A9-0233/2023	05/07/2023	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading /single reading		T9-0318/2023	13/09/2023	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T9-0319/2024	24/04/2024	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Coreper letter confirming interinstitutional agreement	GEDA/A/(2024)001398	08/03/2024	
Draft final act	00088/2024/LEX	23/10/2024	

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(2022)0542	26/10/2022	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2022)0542	27/10/2022	
Document attached to the procedure	SWD(2022)0345	27/10/2022	
Document attached to the procedure	SWD(2022)0542	27/10/2022	
Document attached to the procedure	SWD(2022)0545	27/10/2022	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2024)394	08/08/2024	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary

Contribution	CZ_CHAMBER	COM(2022)0542	10/02/2023	
Contribution	CZ_SENATE	COM(2022)0542	13/03/2023	
Contribution	ES_PARLIAMENT	COM(2022)0542	21/03/2023	
Contribution	DE_BUNDESRAT	COM(2022)0542	11/04/2023	
Contribution	RO_SENATE	COM(2022)0542	12/04/2023	
Contribution	IT_SENATE	COM(2022)0542	08/06/2023	
Contribution	PT_PARLIAMENT	COM(2022)0542	15/09/2023	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES5604/2022	22/02/2023	
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR6180/2022	05/07/2023	

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Parliament	Briefing	19/04/2024
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Meetings with interest representatives published in line with the Rules of Procedure

Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs and Committee Chairs

Transparency

Name	Role	Committee	Date	Interest representatives
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	21/02/2024	Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	19/02/2024	ClientEarth AISBL European Environmental Bureau Transport and Environment (European Federation for Transport and Environment) HEAL Health and Environment Alliance
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	09/02/2024	The European Steel Association
PAULUS Jutta	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	TRAN	07/02/2024	ClientEarth AISBL European Environmental Bureau
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	24/01/2024	Ajuntament de Barcelona
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	24/01/2024	Contexte Magazine
KOKKALIS Petros	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	17/01/2024	ClientEarth AISBL

LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	16/01/2024	Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	05/01/2024	The European Steel Association
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	08/12/2023	European Environmental Agency
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	04/12/2023	IHK Reutlingen
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	22/11/2023	Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	07/11/2023	Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety Germany
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	07/11/2023	Bruegel
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	25/09/2023	Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico España
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	19/09/2023	Ministry of Climate and Environment Poland
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	11/09/2023	UNICEF
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	07/09/2023	DEUS
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	07/09/2023	Bundesverband der Deutschen Kalkindustrie e.V.
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	04/09/2023	European Environmental Bureau
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	08/06/2023	DEUS POLLUTRACK Smart City GmbH i.G.
KOKKALIS Petros	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	06/06/2023	UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	30/05/2023	DEUS POLLUTRACK Smart City GmbH i.G.
TAX Vera	Rapporteur for opinion	TRAN	25/05/2023	FEPORT
TAX Vera	Rapporteur for opinion	TRAN	25/04/2023	Provinces of Zuid-Holland and Utrecht, IPO and VNG
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	19/04/2023	Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club e.V.
TAX Vera	Rapporteur for opinion	TRAN	29/03/2023	CLIA
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	28/03/2023	Stop Quemas Murcia
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	14/03/2023	Palas GmbH
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	09/03/2023	Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V. thyssenkrupp Steel Europe AG
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	09/03/2023	Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.
KOKKALIS Petros	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	07/03/2023	Exodraft A/S
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	06/03/2023	Dutch House of Representatives
KOKKALIS Petros	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	28/02/2023	Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	15/02/2023	Verband Deutscher Maschinen- und Anlagenbau (VDMA e.V.) KIT
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	09/02/2023	European Environmental Agency
				European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients'

TAX Vera	Rapporteur for opinion	TRAN	07/02/2023	Associations
KOKKALIS Petros	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	31/01/2023	European Respiratory Society
KOKKALIS Petros	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	27/01/2023	ClientEarth AISBL
KOKKALIS Petros	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	26/01/2023	European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	25/01/2023	Generalitat de Catalunya
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	24/01/2023	World Health Organization
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	23/01/2023	ClientEarth AISBL European Environmental Bureau
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	23/01/2023	European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations European Public Health Alliance European Respiratory Society Standing Committee of European Doctors Health and Environment Alliance International Association of non-for-profit Healthcare Payers International Society for Environmental Epidemiology
LINS Norbert	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	13/01/2023	VDMA e.V. KIT
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	10/01/2023	ISGlobal International Society for Environmental Epidemiology
LÓPEZ Javi	Rapporteur	ENVI	10/01/2023	DG Environment
KOKKALIS Petros	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	15/11/2022	European Environmental Bureau
KOKKALIS Petros	Shadow rapporteur	ENVI	13/10/2022	European Public Health Alliance

Other Members

Transparency		
Name	**Date**	**Interest representatives**
WÖLKEN Tiemo	24/10/2023	Ständige Vertretung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
DANTI Nicola	12/09/2023	European Environmental Bureau Cittadini per l'Aria ONLUS
WÖLKEN Tiemo	11/09/2023	ClientEarth AISBL
BENIFEI Brando	11/09/2023	CITTADINI PER L'ARIA
CHAHIM Mohammed	20/07/2023	ClientEarth
WÖLKEN Tiemo	25/05/2023	Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.
LIMMER Sylvia	24/01/2023	Deutsches Umweltbundesamt
CERDAS Sara	20/01/2023	All Policies for a Healthy Europe Johnson & Johnson Vodafone Belgium SA ECHAlliance Europe Cancer Patient Coalition
CUFFE Ciarán	06/12/2022	European Society of Cardiology

Final act

Directive 2024/2881
OJ OJ L 20.11.2024

Summary

Ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Recast

2022/0347(COD) - 05/07/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Javi LÓPEZ (S&D, ES) on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (recast).

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading in the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the proposal as follows:

Objectives

The report calls for full alignment of EU limit values with the **World Health Organization** (WHO) 2021 air quality guidelines by 2030.

The Directive will set limit values, target values, average exposure reduction obligations, average exposure concentration targets and critical levels, which must be achieved as soon as possible and by 2030 at the latest, then reviewed regularly thereafter. It will also set long-term objectives, information thresholds and alert thresholds, which are part of air quality standards.

The Directive should define: (i) ambient air quality monitoring measures, long-term trends and the effects of Union and national measures, as well as measures established in cooperation with **third countries**, on ambient air quality; (ii) measures to ensure that information on ambient air quality is harmonised throughout the Union and made available to the public; (iii) measures to promote greater cooperation between Member States, regional and local authorities, at national and cross-border level, and with third countries bordering the Union.

Definitions

Members introduced the definition of 'air quality standards' as well as the definition of '**air pollution hotspots**' including ports or airports.

'Limit value' is defined as a level which is established on the basis of scientific knowledge, with the aim of avoiding, preventing or reducing harmful effects on human health and/or the environment, and which is to be attained within a given period and not to be exceeded once attained.

Members consider it necessary to **clearly distinguish** between plans that must be adopted before the deadline for compliance and those that must be adopted after, and this is why a definition of the 'air quality roadmap' is proposed.

Assessment of Ambient Air Quality

With regard to the assessment of ambient air quality for pollutants, it is specified that Member States should monitor the levels of **ultrafine particulate matter, black carbon, ammonia and mercury**.

Sampling points

The location of sampling points should be representative of the exposure of at-risk populations and the exposure of one or more sensitive populations and vulnerable groups.

Monitoring supersites

Each Member State should establish at least one monitoring supersite per **2 million inhabitants** (instead of 10 million) at an urban background location. Member States that have fewer than 2 million inhabitants shall establish at least one monitoring supersite at an urban background location.

Measurements at all monitoring supersites at urban background locations and rural background locations should include fixed measurements of particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), sulphur dioxide (SO2), carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O3), black carbon (BC), ammonia (NH3) and ultrafine particles (UFP).

Requirements when levels are below limit values, ozone target and average exposure concentration objectives

Members suggested defining a smaller geographical area for the calculation of the average exposure indicator (AEI) and the obligation to reduce the average exposure. They propose this calculation at **NUTS 2** rather than NUTS 1.

Member States should endeavour to achieve and maintain the best ambient air quality and a high level of protection of the environment and human health, in accordance with the most recent WHO air quality guidelines and reviews published by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and below the assessment thresholds set out in Annex II, paying particular attention to the protection of sensitive populations and vulnerable groups.

Exceeding alert or information thresholds

Where any alert threshold laid down in Section 4, Point A, of Annex I is exceeded, Member States should implement without undue delay the emergency measures indicated in the short-term action plans.

Where any alert threshold is exceeded, Member States should take the necessary steps to inform the public within a few hours at the latest, in a **coherent and easily understandable manner**, providing detailed information about the severity of the exceedance and the associated health impacts, as well as suggestions for the protection of the population, with a **special focus on sensitive population and vulnerable groups**.

Air quality roadmap

Where from three months after the date of entry into force of this Directive, in a zone or NUTS 2 territorial unit, the levels of any pollutant recorded for the preceding calendar year are above any limit or target value to be attained by 1 January 2030, Member State concerned should establish an air quality roadmap for that pollutant as soon as possible and no later than 2 years after the calendar year during which the exceedance of the pollutant was recorded in order to attain the respective limit values or ozone target value by the expiration of the attainment deadline.

Air quality plans

Member States should ensure that before the time period for receiving comments from the public starts, the draft air quality plan or draft air quality roadmap containing the minimum information required under Points A and B of Annex VIII is **made available to the public on the internet, free of charge** and **without restricting access to registered users**, and, where appropriate, through other non-digital communication channels.

To inform citizens about poor air quality and its effects, the competent authorities should require the **permanent display of easily understandable information** on the symptoms associated with air pollution peaks and on behaviour to reduce exposure to air pollution in the vicinity of sensitive population communities and vulnerable groups.

Public information

Member States should establish an **air quality index** covering sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and ozone, based on an EU-wide framework containing data that will ensure harmonised information across the EU and make it available in a coherent and easily understandable manner through a public source providing an **hourly update**. The air quality index must be comparable in all Member States, follow the latest WHO recommendations and be based on the European-wide air quality indices provided by the European Environment Agency. The air quality index should be accompanied by information on the health risks associated with each pollutant, including information tailored to sensitive populations and vulnerable groups.

Ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Recast

2022/0347(COD) - 20/11/2024 - Final act

PURPOSE: to set out air quality provisions with the aim to achieve a zero-pollution objective, so that air quality within the Union is progressively improved to levels no longer considered harmful to human health, natural ecosystems or biodiversity, contributing to a toxic-free environment at the latest by 2050.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Directive (EU) 2024/2881 of the European Parliament and of the Council on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (recast).

CONTENT: the directive lays down **enhanced EU air quality standards for 2030** that are closer to the WHO guidelines on air quality. It lays down limit values, target values, average exposure reduction obligations, average exposure concentration objectives, critical levels, alert thresholds, information thresholds and long-term objectives.

Scope

The revised directive covers a host of air-polluting substances, including fine particles and particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), sulphur dioxide (SO_2), benzo(a)pyrene, arsenic, lead and nickel, among others, and establishes specific standards for each one of them. For instance, the annual limit values for the pollutants with the highest documented impact on human health, PM2.5 and NO_2, would be reduced from 25 µg /m³ to 10 µg/m³ and from 40 µg/m³ to 20 µg/m³ respectively.

By 31 December 2030 and **every 5 years** thereafter, and more often if substantial new scientific findings, such as revised WHO Air Quality Guidelines, point to the need for it, the Commission **will review the scientific evidence** related to air pollutants and their effects on human health and the environment. Based on this review, the Commission will then present **proposals** to revise air quality standards, to include other pollutants and/or to propose further action to be taken at EU level.

Assessment of ambient air quality

The directive provides for a common approach to the assessment of ambient air quality which should be followed by applying **common assessment criteria**. When assessing ambient air quality, account should be taken of the size of populations and ecosystems exposed to air pollution. It is therefore appropriate to classify the territory of each Member State into zones reflecting the population density and average exposure territorial units.

Fixed measurements should be mandatory in zones where assessment thresholds are exceeded.

Pollutants of emerging concern, such as ultrafine particles, black carbon and elemental carbon, as well as ammonia and the oxidative potential of particulate matter, will be measured at **monitoring supersites** at both rural background locations and urban background locations. Detailed measurements of fine particulate matter (PM2,5) should be made in order to understand better the impacts of that pollutant and to develop appropriate policies.

Postponement of attainment deadlines

The provisional agreement provides Member States with the possibility to request, by 31 January 2029 and for specific reasons and under strict conditions, a postponement of the deadline for attaining the air quality limit values:

- **until no later than 1 January 2040** for areas where compliance with the directive by the deadline would prove unachievable due to specific climatic and orographic conditions or where the necessary reductions can only be achieved with significant impact on existing domestic heating systems;

- **until no later than 1 January 2035** (with possibility to extend it by two more years) if projections show that the limit values cannot be achieved by the attainment deadline.

Any extension of the deadline in a given area will have to be accompanied by an air quality roadmap (to be established by 2028) and assessed by the Commission, demonstrating that the exceedance will be as short as possible and that the limit value will be respected at the latest by the end of the postponement period.

Air quality plans and air quality roadmaps

In cases where a limit or target value is exceeded or there is a concrete risk of exceeding the alert or information thresholds for certain pollutants, the directive requires Member States to establish:

- an **air quality roadmap** ahead of the deadline if between 2026 and 2029 the level of pollutants exceeds the limit or target value to be attained by 2030;

- **air quality plans** for areas where the levels of pollutants exceed the limit and target values set out in the directive after the deadline;

- **short-term action plans** setting out emergency measures (e.g. restricting the circulation of vehicles, suspending construction works, etc.) to reduce the immediate risk to human health in areas where the alert thresholds will be exceeded.

Transboundary air pollution

Where transboundary transport of air pollution from one or more Member State contributes significantly to the exceedance of any limit value, ozone target value, average exposure reduction obligation or alert threshold in another Member State, that other Member State will notify the Member States from which the air pollution originated and the Commission thereof. The Member States concerned will cooperate with each other, including by establishing joint teams of experts and with technical support from the Commission, to identify the sources of air pollution, contributions of those sources to exceedances in another Member State and the measures to be taken individually and in coordination with other Member States to address those sources, and draw up coordinated activities, such as the coordination of air quality plans.

Access to justice and right to compensation

The new directive sets out provisions to ensure access to justice for those who have a sufficient interest and want to challenge its implementation, including public health and environmental NGOs. Member States should ensure that citizens are entitled to claim and obtain **compensation** where damage to their health has occurred as a result of an intentional or negligent violation of the national rules transposing certain provisions of the directive.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 10.12.2024.

TRANSPOSITION: 11.12.2026 at the latest.

Ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Recast

2022/0347(COD) - 13/09/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 363 votes to 226, with 43 abstentions, amendments to the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (recast).

The matter was referred back to the committee responsible for inter-institutional negotiations.

Subject matter

This Directive seeks to set out a zero-pollution objective for air quality, so that within the Union air quality is progressively improved to levels no longer considered harmful to **human health, natural ecosystems and biodiversity**, as well as aligning with the most recent air quality recommendations from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

This Directive sets:

- intermediate limit values, target values, average exposure reduction obligations, average exposure concentration objectives and critical levels to be met as soon as possible and **by the year 2030** at the latest;

- limit values to be met by **2035**, which are to be regularly reviewed;

- **long-term objectives**, information thresholds and alert thresholds as part of air quality standards.

This Directive defines: (i) **measures for monitoring** ambient air quality long-term trends and impacts of Union and national measures, as well as measures established in cooperation with third countries, on ambient air quality; (ii) measures ensuring that the **information on ambient air quality is harmonised** across the Union and made available to the public; (iii) measures promoting **increased cooperation** between Member States, regional and local authorities, within and between Member States, as well as with third countries that have a common border with the Union, in reducing air pollution.

Sampling points

The amended text stressed the need to **increase** the number of sampling points for air quality. It is stipulated that the location of sampling points should be representative of the exposure of at-risk communities and of the exposure of one or more sensitive population and vulnerable groups.

Monitoring supersites

Each Member State should establish **at least one monitoring supersite per 2 million inhabitants** (instead of 10 million inhabitants) at an urban background location. Member States that have fewer than 2 million inhabitants should establish at least one monitoring supersite at an urban background location.

In zones where high concentrations of ultrafine particles, black carbon, mercury and ammonia (NH3) are likely to occur, there should be **one sampling point per one million inhabitants** (instead of one sampling point per 5 million inhabitants).

Measurements at all monitoring supersites at locations characteristic of urban background pollution and locations characteristic of rural background pollution should include fixed measurements of particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), sulphur dioxide (SO2), carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O3), black carbon, ammonia (NH3) and ultrafine particles.

With regard to ambient air quality assessment of pollutants, it is specified that Member States will have to monitor levels of black carbon, ammonia and mercury.

Requirements where levels are below limit values, the target value for ozone and average exposure indicators

Members suggest defining a smaller geographical area for calculating the average exposure indicator (AEI) and the obligation to reduce average exposure. They propose that this calculation be carried out at **NUTS 2 level** rather than NUTS 1.

Air quality plans and roadmaps

Members propose that, in addition to air quality plans, all Member States should also draw up air quality roadmaps for zones within which concentrations of pollutants in ambient air exceed the relevant air quality limit values set for 2030. The air quality roadmap should set out **short- and long-term policies and measures** in order to comply with those limit values by 2030 at the latest.

Member States should ensure that before the time period for receiving comments from the public starts, the draft air quality plan or draft air quality roadmap containing the minimum information required is made **available to the public on the internet, free of charge** and without restricting access to registered users, and, where appropriate, through other non-digital communication channels.

Relevant stakeholders and citizens should be duly informed about the specific sources and air pollutants affecting air quality and the relevant air pollution mitigation measures that exist and are available on the market.

Greater protection for citizens

In order to inform citizens about poor air quality and its effects, competent authorities shall require the permanent display of **easily understandable information** on symptoms associated with air pollution peaks and on behaviour to reduce exposure to air pollution in the vicinity of communities of sensitive population and vulnerable groups.

Member States should establish an air quality index covering sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and ozone and make it available in a coherent and easily understandable manner through a public source providing an **hourly update**, ensuring that sufficient real-time data is available in all stations.

Ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Recast

2022/0347(COD) - 24/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 381 votes to 225, with 17 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (recast).

The European Parliament’s position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amends the proposal as follows:

Objectives

The directive lays down provisions on air quality with the aim of achieving a '**zero pollution**' objective, so that air quality within the Union is progressively improved to levels that are no longer considered harmful to human health, natural ecosystems and biodiversity, thus contributing to an environment free of toxic substances by 2050.

The new rules set stricter 2030 limits and target values, compared to current rules, for several pollutants including particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10), NO2 (nitrogen dioxide) and SO2 (sulphur dioxide), benzene, carbon monoxide, arsenic, cadmium, lead, nickel and benzo(a)pyrene.

By 31 December 2030 and every 5 years thereafter, and more often if substantial new scientific findings, such as revised WHO Air Quality Guidelines, point to the need for it, the Commission should **review the scientific evidence** related to air pollutants and their effects on human health and the environment relevant to achieving the objectives set out in the Directive.

Establishment of zones and average exposure territorial units

Member States should establish zones and average exposure territorial units throughout their territory, including, where appropriate for the purposes of air quality assessment and management, at the level of agglomerations. Air quality assessment and air quality management should be carried out in all zones and average exposure territorial units.

Postponement of attainment deadline and exemption from the obligation to apply certain limit values

Where, in a given zone, conformity with the limit values for particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide, benzene or benzo(a)pyrene cannot be achieved by the deadline of 2030, Member States may postpone that deadline for that particular zone by a period justified by an air quality roadmap and provided that the certain conditions are met:

(a) **up to 1 January 2040**, if justified by site-specific dispersion characteristics, orographic boundary conditions, adverse climatic conditions, transboundary contributions, or where the necessary reductions can only be achieved by replacing a considerable fraction of the existing domestic heating systems that are the source of pollution causing exceedances; or

(b) **up to 1 January 2035**, if justified by projections that demonstrate that even taking into account the expected impact of effective air pollution measures identified in the air quality roadmap, the limit values cannot be attained by the attainment deadline.

Air quality plans and roadmaps

Where, in given zones, the levels of pollutants in ambient air exceed any limit value or target value laid down in Annex I, Member States should establish air quality plans for those zones that set out appropriate measures to achieve the limit value or target value concerned and to keep the exceedance period as short as possible, and in any case **no longer than 4 years** from the end of the calendar year in which the first exceedance was recorded.

In addition to air quality plans, required for those EU countries exceeding limits, all member states will have to **create air quality roadmaps by 31 December 2028** that set out short- and long-term measures to comply with the new 2030 limit values.

Where an air quality plan or air quality roadmap is not established, Member States should provide to the public and the Commission a detailed justification as to why there is no significant potential to reduce the exceedance resulting in a decision not to establish an air quality plan or air quality roadmap.

Member States should encourage the active involvement of all interested parties in the preparation, implementation and update of air quality plans and air quality roadmaps.

Public information

Member States should:

- make available through a public source, in an easily understandable manner, an **air quality index** covering hourly updates on at least sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and ozone, provided that there is an obligation to monitor those pollutants pursuant to this Directive. Insofar as possible, the air quality index should be **comparable** across all Member States and follow WHO recommendations;

- make publicly available information on **symptoms associated with air pollution peaks** and on air pollution exposure reduction and protection behaviours, and should encourage its display to the public in locations frequented by sensitive population and vulnerable groups, such as healthcare facilities.

Access to justice

It is intended that concerned citizens and environmental NGOs should have access to justice to challenge the implementation of this directive in the Member States, and that citizens should be entitled to compensation where their health has been damaged as a result of breaches of the new national rules.

Ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Recast

2022/0347(COD) - 26/10/2022 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to simplify and consolidate the directives on ambient air quality.

PROPOSED ACT: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: clean air is essential to human health and sustaining the environment. Major improvements in air quality have been achieved in the European Union over the past three decades, thanks to joint efforts by the EU and national, regional and local authorities in the Member States to reduce the adverse impacts of air pollution. However, about 300 000 premature deaths per year and a significant number of non-communicable diseases such as asthma, cardiovascular problems and lung cancer are attributed to air pollution. Air pollution continues to be the number one environmental cause of early death in the EU with the worst pollutants being particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide and ozone. Polluted air also harms the environment causing acidification, eutrophication and damage to forests, ecosystems and crops.

The last update to the Ambient Air Quality Directives (2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC) dates back to 2008. Since then, new scientific evidence about the health impacts of air pollution has become available. The revised WHO Air Quality Guidelines published in September 2021 recommend introducing stricter air quality standards.

PURPOSE: after more than a decade of implementing Directive 2008/50/EC and Directive 2004/107/EC in parallel, the revision of the Ambient Air Quality Directives provides an opportunity to incorporate the latest scientific knowledge and experience with implementation by merging them into a single Directive. This will consolidate air quality legislation, while simplifying rules applying to relevant authorities, enhancing overall consistency and clarity, and thus making implementation more efficient.

Amendments made through this proposal to **merge the current Ambient Air Quality Directives** (2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC) aim to consolidate and simplify the legislation.

In particular, the recast Directive:

- introduces the 2050 zero pollution objective for air quality to ensure that, by 2050, air quality is so improved that pollution is no longer considered harmful to human health and the environment;

- provides for a **regular review** of scientific evidence to check whether the air quality standards in force are still sufficient to protect human health and the environment, and whether additional air pollutants should be regulated. The first review will take place by the end of 2028, with the objective in particular to ensuring full alignment with WHO recommendations;

- supports local authorities by strengthening the provisions on air quality **monitoring, modelling, and improved air quality plans**;

- replaces the current lower and upper assessment threshold with a single assessment threshold per pollutant;

- updates and clarifies rules for the **number and location of sampling points**, including stricter rules for relocating sampling points;

- introduces a new provision requiring a **reduction, by more than half, in public's average exposure to fine particulate matter** (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) at regional level (NUTS 1 territorial units), towards the levels recommended by the WHO;

- introduces **alert thresholds** for short-term measures on peak pollution from particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), in addition to the existing alert thresholds for nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and sulphur dioxide (SO2), given the significant health impacts of particulate matter pollution;

- establishes an effective right for people to be **compensated** where damage to their health has occurred wholly or partially as a result of a violation of rules prescribed on limit values, air quality plans, short-term action plans or in relation to transboundary pollution;

- brings more clarity on access to **justice**, effective penalties, and better public information on air quality.