

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

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A package of anti-pollution measures - the Auto-Oil Programme - designed to clean up road transport in Europe got the green light from the Committee - subject to a raft of amendments. A second-reading recommendation by Ms Heidi HAUTALA (Greens, Fin) is seeking to improve the quality of petrol and diesel fuels; The text conveys the committee's reaction to the Auto-Oil Programme, a collaborative venture between the Commission and the auto and oil industries which was launched four years ago when Parliament and the Council asked the Commission to devise a strategy to reduce road vehicle emissions with the aim of improving air quality. The proposals to improve fuel quality and toughen emission limits prescribe action in two stages: by 2000 and 2005. While it is generally agreed that the first stage should be mandatory, Council and Commission want the last stage to be simply indicative. Rejecting this view, however, the committee decided that there should be mandatory specifications for 2005. The Hautala recommendation, which the committee adopted unanimously, concerns the Auto-Oil Programme's key proposal since improved fuel quality will benefit all vehicles, whether new or old, immediately, whereas emission limits and improved engine technology.