

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

1996/0163(COD) - 18/02/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

Adopting the recommendation for second reading by Mrs Heidi Hautala (Green, D), Parliament reaffirmed the key amendments from the first reading. Parliament agrees with the Council that marketing of leaded petrol should be banned throughout the Union from 1 January 2000, unless a ban would result in severe socio-economic problems. In this case, the deadline could be delayed to 1 January 2005. Parliament considers, however, that leaded fuel marketed after 1 January 2000 should comply with all the other environmental specifications which will enter into force on that date. In addition, unleaded petrol marketed from 1 January 2000 should meet stricter environmental specifications (lower levels than those set by the Council for olefines, aromatics, oxygen and sulphur). This deadline could be delayed to 1 January 2001 if a Member State's industries would encounter severe difficulties in making the necessary changes in their manufacturing facilities. From 1 January 2000, diesel fuel must also meet strict environmental specifications. This deadline could be delayed to 1 January 2003 in the event of serious socio-economic difficulties. It is planned to tighten up the obligatory specifications for petrol and diesel fuel by 1 January 2005. In addition, Member States may in specific areas impose stricter environmental specifications than those provided under the directive, if atmospheric pollution is a serious and recurrent problem. In addition, a better quality diesel fuel than that corresponding to the minimum specification should be available from the year 2000 and the Member States should be able to grant fiscal incentives to more advanced fuels. When the directive is revised in future, the Commission could provide particular specifications for fuel used by buses, taxis and utility vehicles and set levels for LPG, natural gas and biofuels. Parliament also calls for the Commission to be assisted by an advisory committee.