


Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1996/2219(COS)	Procedure completed
Noise pollution: future policy. Green paper		
Subject 3.70.07 Noise pollution		

Key players				
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur	Appointed
	ENVI	Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection		17/12/1996
			PSE DÍEZ DE RIVERA ICAZA Carmen	
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ECON	Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy		23/01/1997
			PPE ARGYROS Stelios	
	ENER	Research, Technological Development and Energy		03/12/1996
			PPE ESTEVAN BOLEA María Teresa	
	TRAN	Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
Council of the European Union				

Key events			
04/11/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0540	Summary
15/11/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/05/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
21/05/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0183/1997	
09/06/1997	Debate in Parliament		
10/06/1997	Decision by Parliament	T4-0283/1997	Summary
10/06/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
30/06/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	

Procedure reference	1996/2219(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/08375

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(1996)0540	04/11/1996	EC	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0436/1996 OJ C 215 16.07.1997, p. 0044	12/03/1997	CofR	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0454/1997 OJ C 206 07.07.1997, p. 0001	23/04/1997	ESC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0183/1997 OJ C 182 16.06.1997, p. 0003	21/05/1997	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0283/1997 OJ C 200 30.06.1997, p. 0017-0028	10/06/1997	EP	Summary

Noise pollution: future policy. Green paper

OBJECTIVE: the Commission's Green Paper is the first step in the development of a programme of action against noise and aims to stimulate public discussion on the future approach to policy on noise reduction. SUBSTANCE: one of the main aims of the Green Paper is to give noise abatement a higher place in terms of legislative priorities: it has been estimated that about 20% of the Union's population or almost 80 million people, suffer from noise levels that experts consider to be unacceptable. The document gives a general picture of the noise situation, reviews Community and national action taken to date and outlines the framework of action covering the improvement of information and its comparability and future options for the reduction of noise from different sources. The future measures envisaged by the Commission are as follows: - general noise: adoption of a directive harmonizing noise exposure assessment methods and organizing the exchange of information followed at a second stage by a document setting target values and requiring the adoption of the measures needed to achieve them; - road traffic: the programme for the reduction of road traffic noise would deal in its second phase with tyre noise. It will study the possibility of integrating noise costs into tax instruments, modifying the Community texts on technical control of vehicles and the possibilities for financial support for the use of low-noise surfaces; - railway noise: assessment of the feasibility of limiting emissions through legislation and of negotiation with the railway industry of agreements setting target values or establishing economic mechanisms such as variable track charges; - air transport: greater stringency in setting emission values, use of economic instruments to encourage the development and use of lower noise aircraft and encouragement of local measures such as land use planning; - machinery: simplification of legislation restricting emissions from outdoor machinery and preparation of a framework directive requiring all equipment to bear a label specifying its noise emission level. ?

Noise pollution: future policy. Green paper

The Committee endorses the Commission's plan for a framework directive on measurement and assessment of noise pollution. However, it criticizes the Commission's announcement that the establishment of target values and measures for their implementation is postponed until a "later stage". It points out that, according to the principle of prevention, such target values are urgently necessary for the priority areas of protection against noise, and should not now be put off to some distant future. The Commission's proposal for greater use of economic instruments in noise abatement is acceptable to the Committee; however, the Committee opposes the use of fiscal measures as a kind of "punishment" of those responsible for noise or as a source of public revenue. The Committee also points out that economic instruments are not a substitute for the adoption of provisions on emission limit values. Finally, the ESC urgently recommends that research and development work in the Community should focus on noise abatement, and that efforts be made to improve coordination and concentration. ?

Noise pollution: future policy. Green paper

Mrs DÍEZ DE RIVERA ICAZA's report, which was adopted by the Committee, represents the committee's reaction to the Commission's 1996 Green Paper on future noise policy in the Union. Demonstrating, as everyone knows, that little has improved since RAMÓN JIMÉNEZ wrote his letters, the report urges the Commission to encourage a reduction in noise levels within private dwellings. It also calls for a limit on noise from Walkmans and "stationary music reproducers" (domestic hi-fi systems, etc). Supporting the Green Paper, the committee calls for a framework directive on the reduction of ambient noise, citing figures which show that more than 70 per cent of Europe's population suffer from environmental noise levels much higher than those recommended. "Because of the cross-border nature of noise nuisance, there is a need for an ambitious European noise-reduction policy," according to the report. The committee's own proposals include the production of noise maps,

research into the cost (including health costs) of damage caused by noise, the closure of airports at night, noise education campaigns, the establishment of common methods for measuring noise, the sound insulation of buildings, setting emission limits for outdoor machinery and a multi-faceted attempt to reduce the main source of environmental noise, which is the transport of passengers and goods, particularly by road. However, the committee also accepted that legislation with economic implications should not be introduced without prior cost-benefit assessment showing that the benefits are proportionate to the costs. ?

Noise pollution: future policy. Green paper

In adopting the report by Mrs DIEZ DE RIVERA ICAZA (PSE, E), Parliament endorsed the Commission's Green Paper and called for a framework directive to be adopted in the near future on the reduction of ambient noise. It called on the Commission to establish common methods for measuring and evaluating noise and common exposure indices, relating to both daytime and night-time, and urged it to encourage, in addition, a reduction in noise levels within private dwellings. Moreover, it calls for the noise level of walkmen and household hi-fi systems to be limited, for 'noise maps' to be drawn up for the benefit of the general public, for a study into the actual cost of the damage caused by noise, including health costs, to be carried out, for a reduction in aircraft movements at night, for 'noise education' of the general public, for the formulation of common methods for measuring noise, for effective soundproofing of buildings and for the setting of noise limits for equipment used outdoors. Parliament also calls for measures designed to reduce the main source of ambient noise, namely passenger and freight transport, in particular by road. The Commission is called upon to submit by the end of the year, a new directive on directive on rail transport involving a reduction in noise on heavily used lines. ?