Reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants

2013/0443(COD) - 28/10/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted amendments to the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants and amending Directive 2003/35/EC.

The matter had been referred back to the competent committee for re-consideration. The vote on the legislative resolution has been put back to a later session.

The main amendments adopted in plenary are the following:

Subject matter: Parliament specified that the Directive aims at limiting atmospheric emissions of acidifying and eutrophying pollutants, ozone precursors, primary particulate matter and precursors of secondary particulate matter and other air pollutants, thereby contributing to:

- the Union's long-term objective of achieving levels of air quality that do not give rise to significant negative impacts on and risks to human health and the environment, in line with the air quality guidelines published by the World Health Organisation (WHO);
- the achievement of Union biodiversity and ecosystem objectives by reducing the levels and deposition of acidifying and eutrophying pollutants, and other pollutants, including ground-level ozone, below critical loads and levels;
- the achievement of the air quality objectives set out in legislative acts of the Union;
- the mitigation of climate change impacts by reducing emissions of short-lived climate pollutants and by improving synergies with Union climate and energy policy.

The Directive shall in particular, be aligned with evolving Union and international climate change action, including, but not limited to, the 2030 policy framework for climate and energy and a comprehensive, binding global climate change agreement.

National emission reduction commitments: Parliament strengthened the Commission proposals and called for more ambitious national ceilings to be met by 2030.

Accordingly, Member States should:

- limit their annual anthropogenic emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO2), nitrogen oxides (NOx), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC), ammonia (NH3), particulate matter (PM2,5) and mercury (Hg) in accordance with the national emission reduction commitments applicable from 2020, 2025 and 2030, as laid down in Annex II;
- as a minimum, limit their annual anthropogenic emissions of methane (CH4), except emissions of enteric methane produced by ruminant livestock in accordance with the national emission reduction commitments applicable from 2030, as laid down in Annex II;
- provide, in their reports submitted to the Commission, updates on their progress towards achieving their national emission reduction commitments.

The Commission should carry out an impact assessment on Mercury (Hg) before a national emission reduction commitment is determined and, if necessary, submit a new legislative proposal.

Flexibilities for international maritime transport: Members deleted the Commission proposal concerning the flexibilities allowing Member States to offset NOx, SO2 and PM2,5 emission reductions achieved by international maritime traffic against NOx, SO2 and PM2,5 emissions released by other sources in the same year, under certain conditions.

Instead, Parliament asked the Commission to consider, on the basis of the regular reports, measures for reducing emissions from international shipping particularly in Member States' territorial waters and exclusive economic zones, and, if appropriate, submit a legislative proposal.

National air pollution control programmes: in order to reduce emissions from the main contributors, national air pollution control programmes should include measures applicable to all relevant sectors, including agriculture, industry, road transport, non-road mobile machinery, inland and domestic shipping, domestic heating and solvents.

These programmes shall also:

- consider the cost-effectiveness of emission reduction measures;
- prioritise specific policy measures which aim at reducing risks to the health of vulnerable groups of people and to ensure compliance with the exposure;
- quantify the additional emission reductions needed in order to meet by 2030 ambient air quality levels equal to or below the levels as recommended by the World Health Organisation;
- support the shift of investments towards clean and efficient technologies and sustainable production with the help of fiscal incentives.

The Commission shall ensure that all EU source-based air pollution policies are fit for purpose and contribute towards reaching the Union air quality objectives. To this end, the Commission and the Member States shall immediately agree on the new Euro 6 Real Driving Emissions (RDE) regulation proposal currently under consideration.

Member States shall establish a system of routine and non-routine environmental inspections and market surveillance.

Public consultation: Member States shall ensure that members of the public concerned are consulted at an early stage in the drawing up and review of draft national air pollution control programmes and in any updates of those programmes prior to their finalisation.

The public concerned must have access to administrative or judicial procedures to challenge acts and omissions by competent authorities or private persons which do not comply with the Directive.

Clean Air Fund: the Commission shall facilitate access to financial support to help ensure that appropriate measures can be taken to comply

with the objectives of this Directive. This shall include available funding under, inter alia: (a) agricultural funding; (b) future work programmes of the Horizon 2020; (c) European Structural and Investment Funds; (d) funding instruments for the environment and climate action such as LIFE.

The Commission shall set up a European Clean Air Forum to facilitate the coordinated implementation of the Clean Air Programme.

Report: the Commission shall, every 30 months starting from the entry into force, present a report on the implementation of this Directive. In doing so, the Commission shall assess no later than 2025, the progress in the reduction of air pollutants emissions with a view to safeguarding progress towards achieving the World Health Organisation's recommended air quality levels. In particular, it shall, if appropriate, and taking into account scientific and technological progress, propose changes to the national emissions reduction commitments in Annex II.