

Energy: use of biofuels for road transport

2001/0265(COD) - 02/12/2002 - Commission communication on Council's position

The Commission considers that the common position adopted unanimously by the Council is faithful to the spirit of the Commission's proposal which was itself tabled in response to concerns expressed by the Council and the European Parliament. The Commission believes that the common position reflects the concerns and incorporates many of the amendment of the Parliament. On the key issue of the nature of the targets, the common position offers an alternative to either purely mandatory or purely voluntary action. Every Member State will, for the first time, have to work towards a target for the expansion in the use of biofuels for transport. The common position also retains the ambitious targets endorsed by the Parliament for the growth of biofuels and ensures that Member States choosing to set targets below these 'reference values' will have to justify this decision against a fairly narrow set of criteria. Furthermore, the common position leaves open the possibility for the Commission to bring forwards future proposals for mandatory targets should the system envisaged be seen to be failing to achieve the overall objectives of the Directive. As regards the definition of biofuels, the Commission seeks to ensure that "other renewable fuels" use in the transport sector are not ignored by the proposal. The Commission appreciates that Parliament wishes to see biofuels introduced in a considered way, on the basis of clear evidence of their benefits. The Council shares this position and the common position incorporates or adapts a number of the specific amendments proposed by Parliament. In particular, the detailed and wide-ranging two-yearly reports proposed in the common position should provide reassurance to the Parliament. The common position also incorporates changes, reflecting the concerns of Parliament regarding the provision on information to consumers. Although the Commission, on the issue of the targets, notes that the common position has changed from mandatory to indicative, it believes that the common position has achieved a compromise between the need to take action at Community level and then need for Member States to have a degree of discretion in pursuing and achieving this shared objectives, under close monitoring by the Community.?