COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 04.08.2000
COM(2000) 525 final

1998/0333 (COD)

OPINION OF THE COMMISSION

pursuant to Article 251(2)(c) of the EC Treaty on the European Parliament's amendments to the Council's common position regarding the proposal for a

DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

relating to limit values for benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air

AMENDING THE PROPOSAL OF THE COMMISSION
pursuant to Article 250 (2) of the EC Treaty

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1. BACKGROUND

- The proposal was presented to the Council on 1 December 1998 (COM(1998)591-1998/0333 COD – OJ C 53, 24.02.1999, p.8).

- The Economic and Social Committee adopted its favourable opinion (no proposed amendments) on 25 March 1999 (CES/1999/333). The Committee of the Regions decided at its session of 28 June 1999 that it would not give an opinion.

- The European Parliament gave its opinion (first reading) at its sitting of 2 December 1999.

- The Commission adopted the amended proposal on 11 April 2000 (COM/2000/223 – 1998/0333 (COD)).

- At its meeting on 13 December 1999 the Council unanimously reached a political agreement with a view to adopting a Common Position.

- The Council's Common Position was adopted on 10 April 2000.

- On 06 July 2000, at its second reading, the European Parliament adopted Council's Common Position with one amendment.

- This opinion sets out the Commission's position on the European Parliament's amendment in accordance with Article 251 (2)(c) of the EC Treaty.

2. PURPOSE OF COMMISSION PROPOSAL

The purpose of this Directive is to set limit values for the protection of human health for benzene and carbon monoxide as required under Article 4 in connection with Annex I of the Council Directive on ambient air quality assessment and management (96/62/EC).

3. COMMISSION'S OPINION ON THE AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY THE PARLIAMENT

3.1. Parliament's amendment on second reading

Parliament's amendment adds to Recital 10 of the Common Position the requirement that air pollution in enclosed spaces, as well as in outside air, should be taken into account in the review due in 2004. Though the Directive exclusively addresses ambient air, the Commission agrees that all aspects of health effects should be considered under the review. Therefore the Commission accepts the amendment.

3.2. Amended proposal

The Commission will not prepare an amended proposal, but invites the Council to take full account of this Opinion, when considering the amendment proposed by the Parliament.

Having regard to Article 250, paragraph 2 of the EC Treaty, the Commission modifies its proposal as indicated above.