Opinion on the proposal for a Council Directive relating to measures to be taken against air pollution by emissions from motor vehicles and amending Directive 70/220/EEC [1]

(93/C 201/05)

On 5 February 1993 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 100 A of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, on the abovementioned proposal.

The Section for Industry, Commerce, Crafts and Services, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its Opinion on 5 May 1993. The Rapporteur was Mr Pearson.

At its 306th Plenary Session (meeting of 26 May 1993) the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following Opinion unanimously.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Committee recognizes and welcomes the terms of this amending Directive as a further easing of the environmental pollution caused by motor vehicle emissions.

1.2. The basic Directive concerning the levels of fuel emissions of motor vehicles of not more than six seating positions and not exceeding 2 500 kg mass is 70/220/EEC dated 20 March 1970 [2]. Since then there have been a number of amending Directives progressively reducing the permitted limit values of emissions of CO, HC, NO_x and of particulates, the latest being 91/441/EEC (26 June 1991) [3].

1.3. In that Directive 91/441/EEC there was a requirement for the Commission to propose, prior to 31 December 1992, a further reduction in permitted emission limits based on the best technology which will be available after 1996. The current proposal is in response to this obligation containing a framework for the further reduction of emissions to be in force by the year 2000.

2. General comments

2.1. The implementation of the value limits in 91/441/EEC has required change in engine technology and the use of three-way converter catalysers. Further sophistication of these new technologies is foreseen with anticipated reduction of 20 % limit value of CO and 50 % for HC and NO_x by 1996. Until now, for passenger vehicles, the limit values of emissions have been set at the same level for petrol engined and diesel engined cars. The new proposals recognize that this is now not possible and it has been necessary to differentiate between the two fuels: two emission levels also are required catering for diesel engined cars which have direct injection and those with indirect injection systems.

2.2. Conformity of production: the new proposals, in the interest of more efficient enforcement of emission limits at production level have introduced a statistical sampling procedure. Previous Directives dealing with motor emission levels had provided for a tolerance between type approved models and subsequent series produced vehicles: that permitted variance had declined from 25 % to 16 %, and is now dispensed with. The Committee believes that this new system can be effective but stresses that there must be close monitoring of the operation to ensure that it is better than the current method.

2.3. As a year is the least possible time for legal enforcement for new type approvals and the new limit values for all types of vehicle it is agreed that 1 January 1996 and 1 January 1997 are accepted as reasonable operational dates for the implementation of the amending Directive.

2.4. The 'Medium Term Target': aiming at further reductions again for the year 2000 is at present the case of urgent investigation. Greater environmental benefit can only be achieved by a multifaceted approach combining actions in the areas of engine/vehicle technologies, fuel quality, in-use vehicle inspection and maintenance and vehicle evaporative emissions.

2.4.1. Petrol and diesel fuels of the correct grade must be available for all vehicles throughout the Member States and coordination with the petroleum industry is vital if the deadlines for implementation are to be kept. Promotion of the use of environmentally friendly fuels should be encouraged.

2.4.2. The Committee recommends that a Community research and development programme be under-

(1) OJ No C 56, 26. 2. 1993, p. 34.
(2) OJ No C 112, 20. 12. 1973, p. 1.
(3) OJ No L 242, 30. 8. 1991, p. 1.

taken into the quality and efficacy of alternative fuels for motor vehicles.

2.4.3. Member States should give greater priority to the management of transport and traffic regulation, particularly in city areas, in order to reduce pollution caused by exhaust gases of vehicles.

3. The Commission notes that the cost of compliance with the new proposed standards '.... will not be insubstantial', this is true but it is doubtful whether the Commission is correct in stating that the costs will be reduced as a result of the growth of the internal market. Nevertheless the Committee, in the interest of further improvement of the environment, believes this is a legitimate cost to bear.

4. The Member States are encouraged to view the Commission parameters for tax incentives for motor vehicles which meet the future emission standards as laid down in Article 3 of the Directive. Member States should also consider incentives to modernize the vehicle park.

5. **Specific comments**

5.1. The Committee yet again points to the laxity of many Member States in the surveillance of the required minimum standards of maintenance of motor vehicles, particularly in relation to emission levels. The Committee has already welcomed Directive 92/55/EEC on road worthiness testing and insists that the terms of that Directive be implemented without any further delay in all the Member States.

5.2. It believes that it is urgent to develop new lower emitting power sources: the present reliance on the three-way converter catalyser is acceptable only as an intermediate solution, because the current limited working life and high replacement cost means that much tighter control is necessary. The sophistication of the most modern injection systems also require supervision to retain the necessary degree of tuning through on board diagnostic systems.

5.3. The Committee believes that it is necessary for manufacturers to make available as normal course, details of the vehicle emission performance for each new vehicle. The purchaser thus can form an overall judgement as to which vehicle is considered the most environmentally friendly.

6. **Conclusions**

6.1. The Committee, on the understanding that the proposed Directive is adopted without any delay in the dates set out in the Articles, can agree to the levels proposed:

— petrol engines: CO 2,2 g/km, HC and NO_x 0,5 g/km,

— diesel engines indirect injection: CO 1,0 g/km, HC and NO_x 0,70 g/km, particulates 0,08 g/km,

— diesel engines direct injection: CO 1,0 g/km, HC and NO_x 0,90 g/km, particulates 0,10 g/km.

It is hoped, however, that ongoing research and development will allow further improvement in particulate values.

Done at Brussels, 26 May 1993.

The Chairman

of the Economic and Social Committee

Susanne TIEMANN