

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

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1019th Council meeting

- Environment -

Luxembourg, 27 and 28 June 1985

President: Mr Alfredo BIONDI
Minister for Ecology
of the Italian Republic

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Firmin AERTS
State Secretary for
Public Health and the Environment

Denmark:

Mr Christian CHRISTENSEN
Minister for the Environment

Mr Mogens BUNDGAARD-NIELSEN
State Secretary,
Ministry of the Environment

Germany:

Mr Friedrich ZIMMERMANN
Federal Minister for the
Interior

Mr Martin BANGEMANN
Federal Minister for
Economic Affairs

Mr Carl-Dieter SPRANGER
State Secretary,
Federal Ministry of the Interior

Greece:

Mr Evangelos KOULOUMBIS
Minister for Regional Planning
and the Environment

France:

Mrs Huguette BOUCHARDEAU
Minister for the Environment

Ireland:

Mr Liam KAVANAGH
Minister for the Environment

Italy:

Mr Alfredo BIONDI
Minister for Ecology

Luxembourg:

Mr Robert KRIEPS
Minister for Justice,
the Environment and
Cultural Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr P. WINSEMIUS
Minister for Housing, Regional
Planning and the Environment

United Kingdom:

Mr William WALDEGRAVE
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State,
Department of the Environment

Mr John BUTCHER
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of
State,
Department of Trade and Industry

Commission:

Mr Karl-Heinz NARJES
Vice-President

Mr Stanley CLINTON DAVIS
Member

AIR POLLUTION BY GASES FROM ENGINES OF MOTOR VEHICLES

The Council, the Commission and the Member States ⁽¹⁾, after long and detailed negotiations, reached agreement on the directive on air pollution by gases from engines of motor vehicles. The main elements of this agreement are as follows:

Category of vehicles	Dates of implementation (new models/new cars)	Emission norms (grammes/test)
More than 2 litres	1.10.1988/1989	CO 25;HC+NOx 6.5 NOx 3.5
1.4 - 2 litres	1.10.1991/1993	CO 30;HC+NOx 8
Less than 1.4 litres	A. 1.10.1990/1991 B. The European standard and the date of its implementation will be decided in 1987 and the date of implementation will not be later than 1992/1993	CO 45;HC+NOx 15 NOx 6

Member States will use their best endeavours to encourage the introduction and general availability on their territories of unleaded petrol as soon as possible.

The Commission will bring forward appropriate proposals before the end of 1985 concerning emissions from vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, particulate emissions from diesel vehicles, speed limits and the regular testing of vehicles in use.

⁽¹⁾ The Danish delegation has placed a reservation; the United Kingdom gave its agreement ad referendum.

The Commission undertook to make a proposal as soon as possible and in any case before the end of 1985 concerning particulate emissions from diesel vehicles. The Council undertook to use its best endeavours to take a decision within three months. Meanwhile the German government made clear that it will not apply provisions related to diesel particulates in its financial compensation system.

Diesel vehicles over 2000 cc. will be considered as vehicles in the intermediate category.

The Council noted a declaration by the Commission in which it undertakes to co-operate with the Greek authorities in examining the particular difficulties for Greece arising from atmospheric pollution, especially in the Athens area. In cases where pollution exceeds acceptable levels, the Commission will, with a view to its early reduction, undertake, in agreement with the Greek government, appropriate measures within its own authority and will, in addition, make appropriate proposals to the Council. Such actions could, in particular, aim at the reduction of emissions from the whole of the vehicle fleet.

EEIG

The Council evolved a common position on the Regulation on the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG). This Regulation establishes a legal and fiscal framework for the setting up of the EEIG and determines in particular the conditions governing access, management and liability by EEIG members.

The aim of this new instrument is to facilitate cross-frontier co-operation between undertakings in the EEC and to enable them, in accordance with the objectives of the Treaty, to increase their competitiveness (by pooling resources, sharing premises or equipment, etc.) and to develop their activities (e.g. by creating research centres or distribution units, including outside the EEC, which member undertakings of the grouping could scarcely do by themselves). Consequently, the EEIG could in particular assist European undertakings in coping more effectively with competition, mainly from the United States and Japan, in the field of research and new technologies.

However, in view of its auxiliary nature for its members, the grouping can neither exercise any power of management or control of the activities of its members, nor hold a share in a member undertaking. The number of staff it can employ is limited to 500.

Given that the Member States have to adapt their national laws so that the grouping can operate without difficulty in the Member States, which have at times very different legal traditions, the first groupings will be set up only after a period of 4 years, i.e. on 1 July 1989.

LIMIT VALUES AND QUALITY OBJECTIVES FOR DISCHARGES OF CERTAIN
DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES INTO THE AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT

The Council made significant progress on the proposal for a Directive concerning discharges of certain dangerous substances into the aquatic environment. The Council reached agreement on the main features of this proposal, which defines the basic principles to be applied for determining limit values and quality objectives for the substances included in List I to Directive 76/464/EEC (particularly toxic substances).

It instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its work, in particular in the light of the European Parliament's Opinion, with a view to reaching agreement on the first specific substances to be covered by the Directive and to determining the limit values and quality objectives applicable to those substances.

POLLUTION FROM LARGE COMBUSTION PLANTS

The Council held an exchange of views on the amended proposal for a Directive on the limitation of emissions of pollutants into the air from large combustion plants.

All the delegations reaffirmed the importance they attached to this proposal, which is an important part of the fight against air pollution.

However, the Council was obliged to note that the current technical discussions which it had requested the Commission to conduct were still not quite completed, in view of the extremely complex nature of the work involved.

It nevertheless invited the Permanent Representatives Committee to expedite its discussions, while emphasizing the importance of finding solutions which would enable it to adopt the Directive in the near future.

LEAD IN PAINT

The Council held a brief exchange of views on the memorandum from the United Kingdom delegation proposing that the Community adopt more stringent control measures for lead contained in paint.

The Commission stated that it was prepared to propose the appropriate measures to the Council.

SECOND PCB/PCT DIRECTIVE

The Council evolved a common position on the draft Directive on PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) and PCTs (polychlorinated terphenyls) which are particularly dangerous substances for health and the environment. This Directive considerably strengthens the Community regulations in force since 1976 concerning restrictions on the marketing and use of PCB/PCT in the Community.

Specific features of this strengthening of the regulations are:

- a considerably more stringent provision reducing the level of PCB/PCT in preparations and mixtures;
- a ban as from 30 June 1986 at the latest on the marketing of PCB/PCT contained in closed systems such as electrical equipment, transformers, condensers, heat-transfer installations, etc.

The Directive also provides for a ban as from 30 June 1986 on the placing on the second-hand market of appliances, plant and fluids containing PCB/PCT.

TITANIUM DIOXIDE

The Council took note of the progress made since its last meeting with the proposal for harmonizing programmes for the reduction of pollution caused by waste from the titanium dioxide industry.

Following its discussions, the Council asked the Permanent Representatives Committee to expedite its examination of all the questions outstanding. This examination should include in particular a thorough comparative analysis of the various values suggested by the delegations. The examination should not however disregard the economic aspects of the problems at issue, particularly with respect to distortions of competition.

IMPORTATION OF BABY SEAL SKINS

The Council took note of a proposal for a Directive designed to keep Directive 83/129/EEC concerning the importation into Member States of skins of certain seal pups in force after 1 October 1985.

The Council noted that, since the proposal had only just arrived, it was not required to take a decision immediately. However, it stressed the political importance it attached to strict observance of the deadline of 1 October 1985.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Other decisions on the environment

The Council adopted, in the official languages of the Communities, a Decision on a supplement in respect of cadmium to Annex IV to the Convention for the protection of the Rhine against chemical pollution. It also took note of a Commission communication on the recommendation by the International Commission for the protection of the Rhine against pollution on the monitoring of cadmium discharges.

The Council also adopted, in the official languages of the Communities

- a Directive on containers of liquids for human consumption (see press release 5606/85 (Presse 36) of 20/21.III.85)
- a Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (see press release 5310/85 (Presse 26) of 7/8.III.85).

In addition, the Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities,

- a Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 3626/82 on the implementation in the Community of the Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora
- a Decision on the adoption of a Commission work programme concerning an experimental project for gathering, co-ordinating and ensuring the consistency of information on the state of the environment and natural resources in the Community.

Agricultural questions

The Council adopted, in the official languages of the Communities, a Directive concerning the Community list of less-favoured farming areas within the meaning of Directive 75/268/EEC (Ireland) and extending them.

The Council also adopted, in the official languages of the Communities, the seventh Decisions on

- the equivalence of field inspections carried out in third countries on seed-producing crops
- the equivalence of seed produced in third countries.

In addition, the Council adopted, in the official languages of the Communities, a Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 2036/82 adopting general rules concerning special measures for peas, field beans and sweet lupins. Among other things this Regulation lays down the implementing procedures for the introduction of the system of monthly increases decided on by the Council when it was fixing the 1985/1986 farm prices.

EEC-United States relations

The Council approved the Regulation suspending tariff concessions and increasing the common customs tariff duties applicable to certain products originating in the United States. It was understood that this Regulation would enter into force only if the United States were to apply additional customs duties to imports of pasta products from the Community.

Relations with the ACP States

The Council adopted, in the official languages of the Communities, a Regulation opening, allocating and providing for the administration of a Community tariff quota for rum, arrack and tafia falling within subheading 22.09 C I of the Common Customs Tariff and originating in the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) (1 July 1985 - 30 June 1986).

Relations with the OCT

The Council adopted, in the official languages of the Communities, a Council Regulation opening, allocating and providing for the administration of a Community tariff quota for rum, arrack and tafia falling within subheading 22.09 C I of the Common Customs Tariff and originating in the overseas countries and territories associated with the European Economic Community (1 July 1985 - 30 June 1986).

Bruxelles, le 27 juin 1985

Note Bio(85) 235 aux Bureaux nationaux
cc: aux membres du Service du Porte-Parole

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ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL, June 27 (M. Berendt)

1. Vehicle emissions

The agenda is dominated by the question of vehicle emissions. The Council negotiations will be on the basis of the guidelines agreed by the Ministers at their meeting of March 20/21 1985, coupled with the proposals made by the Commission for the actual limit values for large and medium sized cars. These proposed values are as follows :

medium size cars : CO: 30 HC+NOx: 8 NOx: 4
large cars : CO: 25 HC+NOx:6.5 NOx: 3.5

The Council reached its agreement in principle on March 20 subject to reserves by the Danish and Greek governments. Ministers committed themselves to establishing new European emissions standards which will be adapted by categories of motor vehicles, so that the effect on the European environment will be equivalent to that produced by American standards, taking into account differing patterns of use for each category. They also set a timetable for introduction of the new limits for different engine sizes.

The position of Member States on the actual limit values range from the German Government's insistence that the Commission proposals are not sufficiently strict, to the British claim that the standards for large cars are too stringent even for the three-way catalyst and that the standards proposed for medium size cars would not be achievable by lean burn technology. The Commission meanwhile maintains the proposals it has already made. The German intention to introduce tax concession on low emission cars as from July 1 will add additional pressure to the proceedings.

2. Dangerous substances

This Commission proposal would lay down limit values for discharges from manufacturing plants for four specific substances: DDT, pentachlorophenol, carbon tetrachloride and chloroform. The proposal is made within the framework of the directive on pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment. Agreement is possible.

2.

3. Titanium dioxide

This proposal for harmonising national programmes cutting discharge of waste from the titanium dioxide industry has already been discussed four times in the Council without agreement. The measures and values submitted in a report from the UK government are not regarded by the Commission or the Member States as adequate to meeting the requirements of the original directive so negotiations continue.

4. PCB/PCTs

The concentration of these chemicals in the environment, particularly in the human body and especially mother's milk, remains at a relatively high level despite restrictions on their marketing and use. The Commission has proposed a further tightening of the restrictions of these chemicals, which are used in equipment such as transformers and in hydraulic fluids. For most of these uses they would be phased out by June 30 1986, although there is disagreement within the Council on the speed for ceasing use in existing installations. A presidency compromise is proposed.

5. Large combustion installations

The Commission regards adoption of this proposal as fundamental to the Community's action against air pollution. It would provide the legal basis for the Community to sign and ratify the protocol of the convention on long range transboundary air pollution which aims at a 30% reduction of total emissions of CO₂ by 1993 compared with the 1980 level. Seven Member States have already agreed to sign this protocol: Greece, Ireland and the United Kingdom have not. This Council is expected to continue discussions in the hope of reaching final agreement later this year.

6. Baby seals

Council will be discussing the Commission's proposal for an indefinite ban on the importation of seal pup skins and products deriving from them. The Commission's proposal provides for a review in the light of the findings of the Canadian Royal Commission on Seals and Sealing.

7. Environmental impact assessment and beverage containers

These two directives will be adopted as an "A" point.

Regards

H. PAEMEN COMUER

Bruxelles, le 28 juin 1985
Note BIO(85)235 (suite 1 et fin) aux Bureaux Nationaux
c.c. aux membres du Service du Porte-Parole

ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL (M. Berendt)

1. Motor vehicle emissions

Agreement of nine Member States on new European standards for motor vehicles was reached at 6.35 this morning. Denmark imposed a general reserve on the agreement while the United Kingdom accepted the agreement ad referendum. The figures are those proposed by the Commission earlier this month, with elimination of a single NOx figure for medium size cars. The figures agreed were as follows:

Category of vehicles	Dates of implementation (new models/new cars)	Emission norms (grammes/test)
More than 2 litres	1.10.1988/1989	CO25:HC+NOx:6.5 NOx:3.5
1.4 - 2 litres	1.10.1991/1993	CO30:HC+NOx:8
Less than 1.4 litres	A. 1.10.1990/1991	CO45:HC+NOx:15 NOx:6

B. The European standard and the date of its implementation will be decided in 1987 and the date of implementation will not be later than 1992/1993

Member States undertook to encourage the introduction of lead free petrol as soon as possible. The Commission is to make proposals before the end of this year concerning emissions from vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, particulate emissions from diesel vehicles, speed limits and the regular testing of vehicles.

A reserve of the Greek government was resolved by an assurance given by the Commission to examine the problems of pollution in Athens and to make suitable proposals.

Standards for medium size cars represented the central problem. Negotiations began with delegations giving predictable figures, but with evidence of a wish to compromise. The two German Ministers present each spoke of the Commission's proposals on medium sized cars as within the right range and respecting the principles laid down by the March 20/21 Council. The British and French regarded the Commission's proposals as too stringent, supported by the Italians.

The Commission maintained its own proposals throughout the discussions until making a proposal that the independent figure for nitrogen oxides should be dropped, leaving a combined figure for hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides. This proposal formed the basis of the final compromise.

Commissioner Clinton Davis said after the meeting that the negotiation had been tough but he was delighted with the degree of success. "We have been dealing with an issue of great complexity, with far reaching political and economic implications. Member States have made big sacrifices in reaching this agreement; Europe's environment as a whole will be the better for it".

2. PCBs/PCTs

The Council approved a directive further restricting the presence of these dangerous compounds in the environment. As from June 30 1986 it will become illegal to market products containing them in closed systems (transformers, condensers, etc.) or to sell second hand equipment, installations or fluids which contain them.

3. Baby seals

There was general acceptance by Ministers of the need to introduce an indefinite ban on the importation of the skins of baby harp, carp or hooded seals or products made from them, subject to a regular report, perhaps every three years. More textual examination is necessary, so the question is referred to COREPER in the hope of a Council decision before the end of July. The present ban expires on September 30, 1985.

4. Titanium dioxide and dangerous substances

COREPER is to do further work on the proposed directive concerning the harmonisation of national programmes for cutting down titanium dioxide emissions and also on the proposal for tighter limit values on four substances: DDT, pentachlorophenol, carbon tetrachloride and chloroform. There was general agreement that the first two compounds should be subject to tight controls, mixed views on the third and fourth.

5. Lead in paint

The Commission expressed its willingness to propose measures limiting the lead content of paint, following a British request supported by the German and other delegations.

6. Two directives concerning beverage containers and environmental impact assessment were formally agreed.

Regards

M. BERENDT , COMEUR////

