

ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL MARCH 20-21 (M. Berendt) ; *emissions des véhicules à moteur*

After a long, slow journey, the Environment Council ended its deliberations at about eight o'clock this morning with agreement between nine member States on exhaust emissions from motor vehicles. The Danish minister had a reserve which it is hoped can be lifted in a few days. Ministers adopted the directive on lead-free petrol and agreed, subject to a British parliamentary procedure, to a directive on liquid containers.

Speaking on behalf of the Commission, Mr Stanley Clinton Davis said that the Council had made an important agreement that would bring about a substantial reduction in atmospheric pollution from motor vehicle. It would safeguard the integral nature of the common market for motor cars and would not inhibit the development of different technologies for reducing vehicle emissions.

"We are delighted to have achieved this agreement this morning. This negotiation has been a long one but in the last two Council sessions Member States showed a willingness to reach an agreement which represents a vital step for the Community's environment policy. The decision will bring up a considerable reduction in atmospheric pollution that is causing such damage to our forests and our natural environment.

The agreement has other positive features :

- it has safeguarded the common market for motor cars;
- it will bring certainty to the Community motor vehicle industry;
- it is framed in such a way that it will stimulate technological development.

Not least, it has averted a very serious crisis which has cast its shadow over the European Council"

The shape of the agreement was much as envisaged, based on a Commission proposal which set dates for implementing emission norms for three different size capacities of car and criteria which will be used for determining the detailed technical standards. These standards will be fixed in further technical discussions between now and the end of June 1985.

The timetable agreed is as follows :

Category of vehicle	Date of introduction (x) (new models/new cars)		Emission norms (gramme/test)
	1988	1989	
More than 2 litres			European standard
1.4 - 2 litres	1991	1993	European standard
Less than 1.4 litres	1) 1990	1991	At least : CO 45 HC + NOx 15 NOx 6
	2) To be decided in 1987, for implementation by 1993/1994		European standard

(x) October 1

The European standards to be fixed in the technical discussions will be adapted "so the effect on the European environment will be equivalent to that produced by US standards, taking into account differing patterns of use for each category". As far as possible, the new European standards should be attainable at reasonable cost and by different technical means, some of which could offer a more stable performance than the catalytic converter, as well as allowing energy saving. The Council agreed that for medium sized cars the European standards can be achieved by 'lean burn' techniques or comparable cost-effective methods.

It was agreed that coherence must be ensured between the Community regime for vehicle emissions and "possible compensation offered by the member States to encourage the sale and use of less-polluting cars during the period before the new European standards enter into force". (For "compensation" read "financial incentives").

The Declaration agreed by ministers provides a framework for the operation of the compensation. It sets out that financial compensation should relate to European standards, may not start earlier than July 1 1985, and must be significantly less than the additional costs involved in equipping a car to meet the new European standards. In the period before the adoption of these standards, small cars which achieve emission levels at least 15 per cent higher than the first stage requirements "may be granted a compensation equivalent to 750 DM. Such a compensation could be distributed over a period of three years". This clause effectively allows the German Federal Republic to exempt such vehicles from car tax for that period.

The negotiation within the Council concluded with a decision to adopt the proposals on the provision of lead-free petrol as from 1989 and a decision in principle on the beverage containers directive which provides for a series of measures designed to encourage producers and consumers to cut waste and save energy in the manufacture and use of bottles, cans and other drinks containers.

RENDEZ-VOUS DE MIDI DU 21.3.1985 (M. Berendt)

NB. : La reunion de la Commission prevue pour cet apres-midi est annulee.

Materiel diffuse :

- IP(85)86 : Bulletin petrolier
- Fiches : Declaration de M. Stanley Clinton Davis suite au Conseil Environnement.

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