



The Current Status of Ambient Air Quality Standards in the EU

**Lynne Edwards
European Commission
DG Environment**



Framework Directive



-
- Directive 96/62/EC
 - Annex I contains the pollutants to be covered by daughter legislation
 - SO₂, NO₂, PM, Pb
 - CO, benzene, ozone
 - PAHs, As, Cd, Ni, Hg
-



Air Quality Framework Directive



- Define and establish objectives for ambient air quality
 - Assess ambient air quality on the basis of common methods and criteria
 - Obtain information about air quality and make it available to the public
 - Maintain and where necessary improve air quality
-



1st Daughter Directive : SO₂, NO_x, PM₁₀, Pb



- Directive 1999/30/EC
 - New limit values for SO₂, NO_x, particulate matter (PM₁₀) and lead
 - Dates for meeting the limit values (2005 and 2010 for health, immediate for ecosystems)
 - Alert thresholds for SO₂ and NO₂
 - Monitoring/ other assessment requirements
 - Public information requirements
-



What will Member States have to do?



-
- Assess air quality throughout their territory
 - Make detailed attainment programmes for the worst areas
 - Meet the limit values by the target date
 - Keep clean air clean
 - Appropriate short-term action plans
 - Provide accessible, comprehensible up-to-date information to the public
-



Attainment programmes



-
- Heart of legislation
 - Legislation does not say what they should contain
 - International measures will do some of the work
 - National and more local measures decided locally
 - Technical and non-technical measures
 - Deciding the best mix is complex and means predicting the future



Public Information



-
- Up-to-date information on air quality to be supplied regularly to the public and media
 - Information to be supplied to the public when alert thresholds are exceeded
 - Attainment programmes to be available to the public
 - Information to be “clear, comprehensible and accessible”
 - Regular reporting to the Commission
-



1st Daughter Directive: timetable 1



- **Full transposition by 19 July 2001**
 - **Preliminary AQ assessment:**
 - **inform Commission of methods by 19 January 2001**
 - **From 19 July 2001**
 - **Full ongoing assessment throughout the territory**
 - **Up-to-date information to the public**
-



1st Daughter Directive: timetable 2



- **Starting September 2002, report to Commission:**
 - zones with concentrations above new health limit value plus margin of tolerance
 - zones with concentrations between margin of tolerance and new health limit value
 - zones with concentrations above ecosystem limit value
- **NEITHER OF THE FIRST TWO CASES IS AN INFRINGEMENT**



What NOT to expect immediately



- Concentrations above new health based limit values: must be met by 2005 or 2010
- Concentrations above the new health based limit value plus the margin of tolerance



What to expect immediately



- Inadequate transposition
 - Inadequate air quality assessment
 - Inadequate, unclear or inaccessible public information
 - Concentrations above OLD limit values
 - Lack of information/APPROPRIATE action when concentrations exceed alert thresholds
-



Looking ahead



-
- **Action programmes to be prepared for zones with concentrations above margin of tolerance within 2 years of occurrence (earliest 2003)**
 - Is it happening?
 - Are they available to the public
 - Is the public involved? (Aarhus)
 - **Other areas with concentrations above limit values - will they be on time?**
-



What can people do themselves?



2nd Daughter Directive: CO and benzene



- Limit values for CO and benzene
- Directive 2000/60
- Published 13 December 2000
- Transposition date: 13 December 2002



3rd Daughter Directive: Ozone



- Target values for ozone
 - to be met as far as possible
 - consistent with National Emission Ceilings
 - attainment programmes
 - scope for short term actions to be investigated
 - Long term objectives
 - no exceedance of WHO guidelines
 - not achievable even with all known measures
 - no attainment date
-



3rd Daughter Directive: Ozone



- Common Position at October Council
- Awaiting second reading in Parliament June 2001
- Adoption second half 2001?
- Proposed transposition date: “at least 18 months after adoption”



PAHs and metals



-
- AQFD requires proposals by December 1999!
 - Working groups established to develop position papers
 - CEN developing reference methods for measurement
 - Draft to be discussed with stakeholders, May 2001
-



Interpretation aids



-
- Guidance on preliminary assessment (done)
 - Guidance on ongoing assessment (soon)
 - Guidance on monitoring PM_{10}
 - Reporting questionnaire
 - All above plus background documents are/will be on AQ website



Sixth Environmental Action Programme



- **Proposal adopted January this year**
 - **Sets strategic framework for EU environmental policy over the next 10 years**
 - **Four priority areas:**
 - **Climate change**
 - **Nature and Biodiversity**
 - **Environment and Health**
 - **Natural Resources and Waste**
-



Clean Air For Europe



-
- Integrated, iterative programme of policy development
 - Based on best available science
 - Precautionary principle
 - Broad and open dialogue
 - Report on first daughter Directive 2003
 - First integrated strategy 2004
-



What we need



-
- **Implement what we have and learn from it**
 - **Common scientific and technical base for decisions**
 - **Investigations that go beyond immediate legislative requirements**
 - **Better knowledge about everything**
 - **Much better information on (total) exposure and impacts**
-



What we need



-
- More transparency about/wider participation in policy planning
 - Better ways of dealing with uncertainty