



12.7.2010

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition 0037/2010 by Peter Kleffmann (German), on behalf of Bürgerinitiative A10-Nord, on noise protection along motorways

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner states that a number of studies (by the WHO among others) show that noise pollution from motorways is harmful to health because it is permanent noise, mainly from lorries, not alternating with quiet periods as is the case with city, air or rail traffic. The petitioner states that more than 15 million people in Germany are subjected to noise pollution from motorways. This may result in sleep disturbances, high blood pressure, depression and an increased risk of heart attack or stroke. The petitioner requests a review of Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise. He calls, inter alia, for local authorities to have a greater say in decision-making on the planning of roads, for the limit values for noise pollution to be adjusted, for a reduction in the speed limit for lorries, for the avoidance and reduction of freight transport by road, and for a large-scale switch from road to rail transport.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 23 April 2010. Information requested from Commission under Rule 202(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 12 July 2010.

The Commission is aware of the studies on noise pollution and its harmful effects to human health. The Environmental Noise Directive aims to reduce the harmful effects of exposure to environmental noise. To this end, it requires Member States to determine the exposure to environmental noise, through noise mapping, to ensure that the information is available for the public and to adopt action plans to prevent and reduce noise where necessary. The

directive does not contain any binding or recommended limit values for noise exposure but such limits can be implemented by the Member States if they so decide. In addition, the systems and procedures in relation to spatial planning are the responsibility for the Member States, although certain projects must be guided by the directive on environmental impact assessment. Finally, in the absence of harmonized speed limits at EU level, Member States are free to decide upon appropriate speed limits for roads in their respective territories.

The Commission intends to submit to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the implementation of the above directive in 2011. The report shall, if appropriate, be accompanied by proposals for amendments to the directive. The Commission will take into consideration all the available information during the review which is foreseen to be completed by the end of 2011.

Conclusions

In view of these elements and in view of the information communicated by the petitioner, no infringement of Community legislation can be identified.