

Environment MEPs vote to curb off-road engine pollution

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Draft rules to cut emissions of major air pollutants from non-road mobile machinery (NRMM), ranging from lawn mowers to bulldozers, tractors and inland waterway vessels, were backed by Environment Committee MEPs on Tuesday. NRMM engines account for about 15% of all NOx and 5% of particulate emissions in the EU.

"Today's vote represents a crucial step in setting rules that, by improving air quality, enhance EU citizens' lives. We have managed to show that environment protection, consumers' health and the competitiveness of our industries are not irreconcilable objectives, as many would like to believe, but, on the contrary, they are two sides of the same coin. I hope that the upcoming negotiations with the Council will confirm and improve the results achieved today", said Elisabetta Gardini (EPP, IT), who is steering the legislation through Parliament, after the committee approved her report by 64 votes to 3, with no abstentions.

The draft rules would cover internal combustion engines used in machines ranging from small handheld equipment, such as lawn mowers and chain saws, through agricultural and farming machinery (harvesters, cultivators), construction machinery (bulldozers, excavators), to railcars, locomotives and inland waterway vessels.

MEPs amended the rules to keep the administrative that they place on small firms to a minimum. Given the long lifetimes of non-road mobile machinery, they also proposed including provisions to encourage owners to retrofit machines that are already in service with cleaner model engines, particularly in densely-populated urban areas and areas in breach of EU air quality legislation.

Temporary exemptions

The committee advocated temporary exemptions from the rules for mobile cranes, heavy machines and all machines with a longer life time manufactured by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

However, the committee did not agree on new emission standards aligned with US norms combined with a Particulate Number (PN) for inland waterway vessels.

MEPS also highlighted the possible synergies between the NRMM sector and heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs) as technologies are interlinked, and invited the European Commission to consider further action in this area.

Measure actual emissions

The Commission should also determine the extent to which emissions resulting from the test cycle correspond to those measured in actual operation, urged MEPs.

Although the NRMM sector is much smaller than other sources of emissions, such as light and heavy duty road vehicles, it emits, according to the European Commission, 15% of all NOx and 5% of particulate matter in the EU.

Cap ultrafine particles

The draft regulation aims to curb emissions of the following major air pollutants: nitrogen oxides (NOx), hydro-carbons (HC), carbon-monoxide (CO) and particulates. For the latter,

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it introduces, in most engine categories, a limit on particle numbers (PN) complementing the limit on particle mass (PM): in this way, emissions of so-called “ultrafine” particles will also be limited, taking up the most recent conclusive evidence on their adverse health effects.

Since NRMM emissions are often concentrated in urban areas with air quality problems, MEPs urged EU member states to take measures to encourage owners to retrofit older type machines with particulate filters.

Next steps

Ms Gardini was given a mandate, by 62 votes to 3 with no abstentions, to start informal negotiations with the Council of Ministers with a view to reaching a first-reading agreement, which would then be put to a vote in Parliament.

Further information

- Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/envi/home.html>
- Procedure file:
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2015/2112\(INI\)&l=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2015/2112(INI)&l=en)

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