

**Question for written answer E-002265/2011
to the Commission
Rule 117
Anja Weisgerber (PPE)**

Subject: Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe - compliance with limit values for particulates

In accordance with Article 22(2) of Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe, the deadline for compliance with limit values for particulates in agglomerations is 11 June 2011. The limit values should have applied from 1 January 2005, although the Commission accepted at the time that many municipalities across Europe would find it very difficult to comply with the directive's emission limit values, despite making great efforts to combat particulate pollution.

In the light of this, Parliament and the Council in their revision of the Fine Particulates Directive established the possibility for towns and cities to apply to postpone the deadline for compliance with emission limit values until mid-2011. For an extension to be granted, however, municipalities must be able to prove that all appropriate pollution reduction measures have been taken to comply with the new deadline. Municipalities must also demonstrate that the deadline could not be met as a result of site-specific dispersion characteristics, adverse climatic conditions or transboundary contributions.

The deadline of 11 June 2011 is fast approaching, yet many European cities are still struggling with high levels of particulates. The Commission has initiated infringement proceedings against 20 Member States; some of these cases are already pending before the Court of Justice of the European Union.

In early 2011 the Commission announced that it would help Member States to comply with air quality standards. At the same time, Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik was quoted in the press as calling for a renewed and comprehensive air quality policy.

What concrete measures to combat emissions at source will the Commission take to help Member States comply with air quality standards?

What form would a new and comprehensive air quality policy take and, given the large number of infringement proceedings against Member States, how will the Commission deal with these proceedings when implementing a new air pollution policy?