CONTENT

On 16 September 2020, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen sent a letter of intent to David Sassoli, the President of the European Parliament, and Chancellor Angela Merkel, as the Presidency of the Council, listing the actions the Commission intends to take in 2021. These actions included the revision of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive. The 2021 Commission Work Programme foresaw the publication of the proposal in the second quarter of 2021.

The 2014 Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive required EU countries to develop national policy frameworks (NPFs) for developing publicly available refuelling and recharging points for alternative fuel vehicles and vessels. The Directive aims to improve coordination of alternative fuel infrastructure development to provide the long-term security needed for investment in the technology for alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles.

In a resolution adopted in October 2018, the Parliament highlighted the need to accelerate the development of alternative fuel infrastructure. It stressed the connection between the availability of alternatively fuelled vehicles, the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure and consumer demand for these technologies. The resolution called on the Commission to revise the 2014 Directive to fill the gaps in the build-up of infrastructure and to replace the system of national plans with more efficient instruments, such as binding and enforceable targets. It also stressed that the scope of the Directive needs to be broadened to cover the TEN-T comprehensive network and urban and regional nodes and called on the Commission to make hydrogen infrastructure deployment mandatory.

On 14 July 2021, the European Commission presented a package of proposals to make the EU's climate, energy, land use, transport and taxation policies fit for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels, known as the Fit for 55 package. The package included the proposal to revise the 2014 Directive on alternative fuels infrastructure. The Commission proposes to repeal the directive and replace it with a regulation, suggesting that the change of instrument is needed to ensure “swift and coherent development” of the infrastructure network across the EU.

The proposed regulation sets a number of mandatory national targets for the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure in the EU, for road vehicles, vessels and stationary aircraft.
For publicly available electric charging infrastructure for light duty road vehicles (cars and vans), the draft regulation sets out mandatory national fleet based targets (e.g. for every battery electric light duty vehicle a total power output of at least 1 kW should be provided through publicly accessible recharging stations (a recharging station is defined as single physical installation at a specific location, consisting of one or more recharging points); for every plug-in hybrid light-duty vehicle, a total power output of at least 0.66 kW should be provided through publicly accessible recharging stations). It also sets out distance-based targets for light duty and heavy-duty road vehicles on the TEN-T core and comprehensive network (e.g. publicly accessible recharging pools (one or more recharging stations) dedicated to light-duty vehicles should be deployed in each direction of travel with a maximum distance of 60 km in between them). It also requires EU Member States to ensure a number of recharging stations are in place for heavy-duty vehicles in urban nodes.

The draft regulation also includes provisions for ensuring user-friendliness of recharging infrastructure (e.g. payment options, price transparency and consumer information, non-discriminatory practices, smart recharging).

For hydrogen, publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations should be deployed with a maximum distance of 150 km in between them along the TEN-T core and the TEN-T comprehensive network and at least one should be available in every urban node.

As regards, electricity supply to vessels and stationary aircraft, the draft regulation sets targets for the deployment of shore-side electricity supply for certain seagoing container and passenger ships in maritime ports and for inland waterway vessels, and for electricity supply to stationary aircraft at TEN-T core and comprehensive network airports.

It also contains provisions for EU Member States to ensure minimum coverage of publicly accessible refuelling points for liquefied natural gas dedicated to heavy-duty vehicles on the TEN-T core and comprehensive network and to ensure an appropriate number of LNG refuelling points in maritime TEN-T ports.

The draft regulation reformulates provisions concerning Member States’ national policy frameworks for the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, including provisions for areas where no mandatory EU wide targets are set and the reporting on the deployment of such infrastructure.

In the Parliament, the file has been referred to the Transport and Tourism Committee (TRAN). The rapporteur is Ismail Ertug (S&D, Germany).

The first discussion in TRAN took place on 1 December 2021. The Slovenian Presidency progress report was discussed at the Council Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council meeting on 9 December 2021.

The draft report was published on 14 February 2022 and presented to the TRAN committee on 14 March 2022. It makes several amendments to strengthen the Commission’s proposed provisions. The deadline for amendments in TRAN was set for 18 March 2022. The vote in TRAN is tentatively scheduled for July.
On 2 June 2022, the Council adopted its General Approach, its position for negotiations with the Parliament on the final wording of new rules.

References:

- EP Legislative Observatory, Procedure file on Deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, ‘Fit for 55 package’, 2021/0223(COD)
- European Commission, Proposal for a regulation on the deployment of alternative fuel infrastructure, COM(2021) 559, 14 July 2021
- European Commission, European Green Deal: Commission proposes transformation of EU economy and society to meet climate ambitions, press release, 14 July 2021
- European Commission, Report on EU-wide alternative fuels infrastructure deployment, March 2021
- Council, Slovenian Presidency progress report on the discussions in the Council on the proposal for the alternative fuels infrastructure regulation, 19 November 2021
- European Parliament, Draft report on the proposal for a regulation on the deployment of alternative fuel infrastructure, 14 February 2022
- European Parliament, Presentation of the draft report in TRAN, video recording, 14 March 2022
- Council, Fit for 55 package: Council adopts its position on three texts relating to the transport sector, press release, 2 June 2022

Further reading:

- European Parliament, EPRS, Deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure: Fit for 55 package, Briefing, November 2021 (updated March 2022)
- European Parliament, EPRS, Alternative fuel vehicle infrastructure and fleets: State of play, Briefing, November 2021
- European Parliament, EPRS, Towards a revision of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive, Briefing, July 2020

Author: Jaan Soone, Members’ Research Service, legislative-train@europarl.europa.eu

As of 23 June 2022.