
(2006/C 229/02)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,


Having regard to the decision of the European Commission on 21 December 2005 to consult it on this subject, under Article 175 and Article 265 (1) of the Treaty establishing the European Community;

Having regard to the decision taken by its president on 24 January 2006 to instruct the Commission for Sustainable Development to draw up the opinion on the subject;

Having regard to its opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions — Towards a thematic strategy on the urban environment (COM(2004) 60 final — CdR 93/2004 fin) (1);

Having regard to its opinion on the White Paper 'European transport policy for 2010: time to decide' (COM(2001) 370 final — CdR 54/2001 fin) (2);


Reason

Annex II to the Directive on Waste should, as stated in the justification for amendment 5, be transferred to a separate Regulation and, in accordance with previous amendments, be deleted.


The President
of the Committee of the Regions
Michel DELEBARRE

(1) OJ C 43 of 18 February 2005, p. 35.
Having regard to its draft opinion (CdR 48/2006 rev. 1) adopted on 3 April 2006 by its Commission for Sustainable Development (rapporteur: Ms Karlsson, Municipal Commissioner and Member of Vindeln Municipal Executive Board (SE/ALDE));

Whereas

1. Local and regional authorities are the decision-making and executive level which is closest to EU citizens. The measures needed to bring about cleaner air in Europe must be devised, accepted, implemented and monitored in dialogue with European Union citizens.

2. In the EU’s 25 Member States it is at local and regional level that the proposed measures to limit the environmental impact of vehicle traffic must be put into practice.

3. Promoting use of environmental vehicles is in line with the local and regional authority objective to decrease energy consumption and, as a result, atmospheric pollution.

4. The local and regional authorities should not carry the burden for promoting clean vehicles alone. Measures are urgently needed for the immediate involvement of the private sector and enterprises carrying out public-sector tasks.

5. It is through the combined impact of measures implemented locally and regionally that the unsustainable trends that we see today can be reversed.

adopted the following opinion at its 65th plenary session, held on 14 and 15 June 2006 (meeting of 15 June):

1. **Committee of the Regions’ comments**

The Committee of the Regions

General

1.1 **welcomes** the Commission’s aim to improve air quality through green public procurement;

1.2 **calls for** the measures, set out in the proposal for a directive, on the procurement of clean road transport vehicles by public bodies to take the form of a recommendation;

1.3 **would stress** that, if however a directive were to be adopted, the proposed measures must be taken forward in close cooperation with the EU’s municipalities and regions. Consultation upstream of the current draft directive was primarily with the car and fuel industry and the Member States at national level;

1.4 **assumes** that, the municipalities and regions are to be involved in further efforts to frame, implement, follow up and evaluate the measures proposed in the directive should it be adopted; **does not**, however, **consider** it necessary expressly to set up a committee to advise the Commission in its work;

1.5 **would stress** the need to inform the public on the measures implemented and to explain the European legislative process and its effects by means of practical examples. The local and regional level has an important role to play here, as — *inter alia* — the Commission’s white paper on EU communication policy confirms;

1.6 **endorses** the essential grounds for and objectives of the Commission proposal; would, however, **stress** that laying down rules on the award of contracts which apply only to the public sector is unacceptable. As the European Commission correctly states in its proposal for a directive, the public sector’s share of the market for vans and lorries is only 6 %, but around 30 % for buses. The Committee would therefore advocate an approach which also involves the private sector to a greater extent. The Committee would, as a matter of principle, draw attention to the importance of adopting ‘soft’, non-legislative measures in the field of green procurement if the requisite basic conditions are in place. Large cities, in particular, are ready voluntarily to achieve high environmental protection objectives;

1.7 **points out** that, if obligations are imposed one-sidedly on the public sector, less financially well endowed authorities in particular might be deterred from investing or forced to outsource services of general interest;

Other measures for promoting clean road transport

1.8 **calls for** a holistic approach to potential measures to promote clean road transport. The Committee has reservations about the mandatory requirement contained in the proposed Directive that public bodies should procure 25 % of heavy duty vehicles on the basis of clean vehicle standards. It would be preferable to apply engine standards for all vehicles and all customer groups. Additional measures are required in order to comply with existing limit values for atmospheric pollution;
1.9 welcomes the intention to promote the use of biofuels. Increasing the production of bioethanol and biodiesel in Europe in order to replace traditional road fuels (petrol and diesel) would bring several benefits. It would:

— reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport;

— safeguard energy supplies as oil reserves dwindle;

— offer the EU’s agricultural and forestry sector opportunities to grow crops and produce wood raw material for the manufacture of biofuels;

— provide developing countries with an opportunity to export biofuels to the EU;

— reduce consumption of natural resources;

Suggested measures

1.10 rejects the directive on the promotion of clean road transport vehicles; the following measures should instead be taken:

— the Commission must draw up a time frame for a European traffic and transport policy that tackles the issue at source, and work to ensure that:

— the Euro 5 standards apply to passenger transport from 2007;

— the Euro 6 standards apply to diesel-powered passenger vehicles and light vans from 2011;

— the Euro VI standards apply to lorries from 2012;

— information and training initiatives must be provided in order to support and develop public sector procurement of clean vehicles. The Commission’s handbook on Green Public Procurement is a valuable tool in this regard but more initiatives are needed;

— initiatives must be taken in order to develop tools to build environmental requirements into public purchasing;

— support must be provided for the development of a green network for public procurement. This would make it possible to carry out comparative studies, promote best practice and set common objectives;

— EU pump-priming research and development initiatives must be prioritised within the area of clean vehicles and related fields;

— priority should also be given to the development of indigenous renewable energy sources in line with the promotion of clean road transport vehicles. To this end, the requisite mechanisms should be set up to encourage the introduction and development of wood crops for the production of biofuels;

Implementation of the proposed directive at local and regional level

1.11 would stress that conditions for implementing the proposed directive on promoting clean road transport would vary across the different Member States:

— In most Member States the measures that ensue from the proposed directive would be financed wholly or partly through national taxation. In a number of Member States the measures are financed through municipal and regional taxation and charges.

— The market for environmental vehicles varies across the EU. Access to clean vehicles varies because inter alia a number of Member States have introduced voluntary commitments to purchase or hire a certain percentage of environmental vehicles, which has boosted the clean vehicles market. The development and introduction of environmental management systems and the EU’s environmental management and accounting system (EMAS) in public works have also contributed to the increase in environmental vehicles.

Given these differing conditions, support to the local and regional level would need to vary across the EU;

Follow-up

1.12 would stress, in case of the adoption of a directive, the need for a follow-up and evaluation of its implementation in close cooperation with the municipal and regional level. It is important that the results of the directive be compiled and presented, both in terms of the number of clean vehicles produced and the impact this has had on air quality. Feedback to the municipal and regional level and to EU citizens is essential if the directive’s intentions are to be pursued and developed. It is also important to the future implementation of additional measures for promoting clean road transport.

2. Committee of the Regions’ recommendations

2.1 calls on EU lawmakers to include uniform measures for the public and private sector in ongoing efforts to promote clean road transport;
2.2 assumes that economic support for green public procurement is to be given to the municipal and regional level;

2.3 underlines the need for information and training initiatives to support and develop public sector procurement of clean vehicles;

2.4 calls for a holistic approach to potential measures to promote clean road transport;

2.5 suggests that the reporting system used to follow up a possible directive on promoting clean road transport be coordinated with other reporting systems. Coordination should be inter alia with the reporting system proposed in the draft directive on air quality and cleaner air in Europe;

2.6 assumes that the municipalities and regions are to be involved in further efforts to frame, implement, follow up and evaluate the measures proposed in a possible directive.


The President
of the Committee of the Regions
Michel DELEBARRE


(2006/C 229/03)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,


Having regard to the decision of the European Commission of 28 November 2005 to consult it on this subject, under the first paragraph of Article 265 of the Treaty establishing the European Community;

Having regard to the decision of its President of 24 January 2006 to instruct its Commission for Culture and Education to draw up an opinion on this subject;

Having regard to its opinion on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing An integrated action programme in the field of lifelong learning (CdR 258/2004 fin (1));

Having regard to its opinion on the Communication from the Commission — Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality (CdR 49/2002 fin (2));

Having regard to its opinion on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning The seventh framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013) (CdR 155/2005 fin);

Having regard to its opinion on the Adoption of a multi-annual programme (2004-2006) for the effective integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (eLearning Programme) (CdR 73/2003 fin (3));


(3) OJ C 244, 10.10.2003, p. 42.
(4) OJ C 73, 23.3.2004, p. 33.