

SUSTAINABLE FUELS

THE NEED FOR AN IMPROVED FUELS QUALITY DIRECTIVE

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Over the past decades, technology improvements led to the production and use of cleaner and safer fuels for vehicles. Fuels produced and sold in Europe met increasingly stringent quality requirements to reduce greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions and protect human health as well as the environment. Directive 98/70/EC (the Fuel Quality Directive) in its successive versions has been successful in limiting the use of several harmful fuel additives such as tetraethyl lead, methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl, benzene, and total aromatic compounds.

Sustainable Fuels **calls for a revision of the Fuel Quality Directive**, in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal. A revision introducing new and tighter fuel quality specifications is necessary to complement the ongoing decarbonisation efforts of the *Fit for 55* package, as urged by the vehicle manufacturing industry too. The search for more efficient low-carbon fuels, especially at higher octane levels, should exclude harmful chemicals whose presence poses great environmental and health risk, and negatively impacts engine performance.

The case of NMA High dosages of N-Methylaniline (NMA) are found in petrol in several EU member states including Italy, Bulgaria, and Malta. Besides their recognized toxicity, nitrogenous Aromatic species can severely damage engines by accumulating into lubricant oil and impair emission control systems. This causes more emissions of nitrous oxide, volatile organic compounds, and other harmful air pollutants.

Why acting now?

The EU embarked on the journey to become the first carbon neutral continent within thirty years and the new framework for transport decarbonisation should not leave fuel quality behind. Inaction results in legislation which lacks complementarity and overlooks clear synergies: more ambitious CO₂ and air pollutants emission limits for vehicles should go together with new specifications for better fuels.

Pursuing to the ambitious decarbonisation targets of the future Renewable Energy Directive, a growing variety of low-carbon fuels is being developed. Updating quality standards will help safeguarding the single market ensuring clean and efficient low-carbon fuels remain available everywhere in the EU.

Sustainable Fuels recommends:

- A **complete and timely revision of the Fuel Quality Directive**, especially of its environmental provisions, raising further the quality standards for fuel components in the European Union.
- In the revision, a **strong focus on articles and provisions covering air pollutants**, notably on current articles 3, 4, 8 and 10, and annexes I to III, with a view to introduce appropriate limits for harmful chemicals in fuels.
- **Addressing existing regulatory loopholes.** To prevent potentially unwanted compounds like NMA or ferrocene from being included in fuel blends.

Sustainable Fuels is a Cefic Petrochemicals Industry Sector group dedicated to the responsible production, use and promotion of clean, high quality, and efficient fuel ethers. For more information, please contact us at [info\(at\)sustainablefuels.eu](mailto:info(at)sustainablefuels.eu)