

Air Quality: Legislation briefing & call for action

European Cyclists' Federation

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Air pollution in the EU: The story so far

The European Commission, Parliament and the European Member States have been working for a long time on air pollution legislation. This is rightfully a European-wide topic, because air pollution travels freely across borders. Progress has already been made, especially when the Commission set limits in all EU Member States by 2010. Cities are taking more and more measures to fight air pollution, because that is where people suffer from it mostly.

But the work is not done yet. Many countries are still trespassing the previous limits, according to the World Health Organisation, the level of air pollution is still too high and causes over 400.000 premature deaths each year in the EU only.

And now we have another chance of improving the air we, cyclists and all other people, breathe in Europe!

New legislation on debate today: What are the stakes?

The European Commission and Parliament have agreed on a **proposal to set new air pollution limits by 2030** (the Parliament also suggests an intermediate limit by 2025, to be sure progress is made steadily).

However, the European Council with the Ministers of Environment of every EU Member State, is trying to bring this proposal to a much lower level in the current negotiations. To put it bluntly: there will be 100.000 more premature deaths if we follow the Council's proposal (compared to the Commission's proposal).

The next negotiation discussion between Commission, Parliament and Council is taking place on **28th April 2016**. This will probably not be the last round of discussion but the sooner we take action, the better.

If we don't succeed, we will have too low air pollution limits until 2030!

Time to act: Here is what you can do

ECF needs your help to lobby the Council. Specifically:

1. We recommend you to contact your national Ministers and stress the importance of agreeing with the Commission's proposal.
2. A very good strategy is to ask your cities to contact the national Ministers. Cities are already taking measures to fight air pollution and protect their citizens, but now their national government is undermining all their efforts.
3. Use the template letter we prepared for you, translate it into your own language and ask cities to send it to the national level.
4. Inform your members and integrate this campaign into your communications activities. Activate your networks and talk to public authorities, other partners and the media using arguments such as the number of premature deaths due to air pollution. (see below)

This is an excellent opportunity to put cycling in the spotlight again in your city and country. We demand clean air for cyclists and everyone else and we also bring a positive solution to a big problem.

Premature deaths due to air pollution

We calculated and published some rough estimates of the number of premature deaths resulting from a weakening of NEC limits as wanted by the Council. Our calculations are based on best available data and show that the Council's position would result in more than 100,000 additional deaths for the whole of the EU between now and 2030.

Below and attached are the limits pushed by the Council compared to the limits proposed by the Commission and Parliament. For Italy and Spain, here are the limits: In red are the pollutant which were watered down the most (and yellow, methane, of course).

Italy

	2030 limits proposed by the supported by the <u>European Parliament</u> <u>European Commission</u> and	2030 limits pushed by <u>Italy</u>
SO ₂	-71%	-71%
NO _x	-68%	-65%
NMVOCs	-49%	-46%
NH ₃	-22%	-14%
PM _{2,5}	-54%	-40%
Methane	-40%	-0% (wants to delete methane from the text)

Spain

	2030 limits proposed by the <u>European Commission</u> and supported by the <u>European Parliament</u>	2030 limits pushed by <u>Spain</u>
SO ₂	-87%	-87%
NO _x	-66%	-62%
NMVOCS	-39%	-39%
NH ₃	-21%	-16%
PM _{2,5}	-62%	-50%
Methane	-34%	-0% (wants to delete methane from the text)