



Recommendation of the Council on Noise Abatement Policies

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Background Information

The Recommendation on Noise Abatement Policies was adopted by the OECD Council on 3 July 1978 on the proposal of the Environment Committee (now called Environment Policy Committee). The Recommendation advises Adherents to develop comprehensive noise abatement programmes, emission standards and noise-level labels for products, to introduce economic incentives and land-use planning policies that incorporate noise abatement requirements, and to conduct public information campaigns.

THE COUNCIL,

HAVING REGARD to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 14 November 1974 on Noise Prevention and Abatement [C(74)217];

CONSIDERING that noise is still one of the most important sources of environmental nuisance and a hazard to human health and welfare and that it is increasing in time and in space;

CONSIDERING the need for comprehensive noise abatement policies and for stringent enforcement of noise regulations;

CONSIDERING that the Organisation will convene a Conference on Noise Abatement Policies in 1979;

HAVING REGARD to the Report by the Environment Committee on Noise Abatement Policies [ENV(78)1];

On the proposal of the Environment Committee;

I. RECOMMENDS that Member countries:

1. Develop comprehensive noise abatement programmes and co-ordinate existing regulations and actions. In particular Member countries should develop comprehensive laws to cover all noise sources and means of action.
2. In their noise control policies give utmost priority to abatement at source through emission standards on noisy products and activities.
3. Strengthen their noise abatement policies by adopting a progressive approach using dynamic standards (i.e. a progressive lowering of noise limits over time according to a predetermined and announced schedule).
4. Support this dynamic approach to noise abatement by using, as appropriate, economic incentives. These incentives could consist of noise related charges for certain noise producing equipment. When this is not in conflict with the national fiscal system, the resulting proceeds should be devoted to the financing and promotion of noise abatement measures.
5. Encourage the production and use of quieter equipment by restricting the use of the noisier ones. Inducements such as exemptions or liberalisation of times of use might be envisaged for any equipment considered exceptionally quiet.
6. Consider the provision for compensation procedures in cases of damages resulting from unacceptable noise levels due to new facilities or from a significant increase in the use of existing facilities as a result of their modification. Such compensation should only be considered when a severe noise nuisance still prevails although all practicable noise abatement measures have been taken.
7. Ensure that land-use planning, including transport planning, incorporate noise abatement requirements and that noise abatement be considered at the outset of public and private projects. Ensure that no new noise sensitive activities (such as new residences) are placed in areas that have high noise levels; include noise abatement measures when rehabilitating housing in urban areas with high noise levels.
8. Combine noise insulation of buildings with thermal insulation required for energy conservation.
9. Introduce measures, which are often at low cost and can be rapidly implemented, as part of a comprehensive noise abatement strategy and as a complement to regulatory procedures, such as:

noise abatement campaigns, information, education, product labels showing the level of noise the product will produce, traffic management, periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of enforcement programmes.

10. Encourage the harmonization of noise measurement methods and test procedures designed to protect the environment and to establish a close link between procedures for measuring noise emission and immission.

II. INSTRUCTS the Environment Committee:

- i) To report by 31 December 1980 to the Council the actions taken pursuant to the above Recommendation and the conclusions reached by a Conference on Noise Abatement Policies to be convened by the Organisation in 1979;
- ii) To provide for an exchange of information concerning national noise control programmes when important new developments take place in Member countries.

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