



Recommendation of the Council on
the Control of Air Pollution from
Fossil Fuel Combustion

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Date(s)

Adopted on 20/06/1985

Background Information

The Recommendation on the Control of Air Pollution from Fossil Fuel Combustion was adopted by the OECD Council on 20 June 1985 on the proposal of the Environment Committee (now called Environment Policy Committee). The Recommendation advises Adherents to pursue policies to control more effectively air pollution resulting from emissions of oxides of sulphur and nitrogen, hydrocarbons, and particulate matter from stationary and mobile sources. It also recommends developing consistent emission control strategies at the regional and national levels, and improving the availability and quality of data on air pollutant emissions.

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 18 June 1974, on Guidelines for Action to Reduce Emissions of Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter from Fuel Combustion in Stationary Sources [C(74)16(Final)] and to the Recommendation of the Council of 14 November 1974, on Measures Required for Further Air Pollution Control [C(74)219];

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 14 November 1974, on Principles concerning Transfrontier Pollution [C(74)224];

RECOGNISING that air pollutants from stationary and mobile sources are frequently transported over great distances and across national borders;

DEEPLY CONCERNED about existing and increasing damage to the natural and man-made environment and increasing evidence of effects on human health resulting, directly or in combination with other factors, from emissions of the major air pollutants from fossil fuel combustion and their conversion products;

CONSCIOUS that some of the effects of air pollution on the environment are cumulative over time, and may be difficult or impossible to reverse;

RECOGNISING that many Member countries have taken steps to reduce air pollutants, either locally or nationally, which have led and will continue to lead to significant reductions in emissions of specific major air pollutants;

RECOGNISING that a number of countries have committed themselves to implement reductions of national annual sulphur emissions by at least 30 per cent as soon as possible and at the latest by 1993, using 1980 emission levels as a basis for the calculation of reduction;

NOTING that knowledge of the effects of air pollution, while still incomplete, is advancing rapidly; and also that reduction of emissions at the source using best available and economically feasible technologies is a particularly important principle, especially as rapid progress has been and is being made in control technologies for both stationary and mobile sources;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT such factors as the state of the environment, the costs and benefits, and the state of economic development of the country concerned, and recognising the need for integration of effective air pollution control strategies and energy and other economic policies;

On the proposal of the Environment Committee;

I. RECOMMENDS that Member countries:

1. Should pursue policies to control more effectively air pollution resulting from emissions of oxides of sulphur and nitrogen, hydrocarbons, and particulate matter, from stationary and mobile sources in their countries in order to achieve environmentally acceptable levels of ambient air quality and deposition of pollutants;

2. Should achieve this objective by an appropriate combination of some or all of the following means:

- More efficient use of energy;
- The use of less-polluting fossil fuels;
- Increased use of non-fossil energy sources, to the extent that these are compatible with other policy goals;
- The use of newer and environmentally more benign combustion technologies;

- Stricter control of air pollutant emissions;

3. Should develop consistent emission control strategies on a regional or national basis, and co-ordinated internationally where appropriate, which might include emission standards for various categories of polluters, regional or national emission ceilings, or other effective and efficient means of reducing emission levels;

4. Should actively encourage internationally co-ordinated research and development aimed at a better understanding of atmospheric processes and effects of air pollution on man and the environment, and at improving technologies for fossil fuel combustion and control of pollutant emissions;

5. Should co-operate to improve the availability and quality of data on air pollutant emissions from different categories of polluters;

6. Should refer to the guiding principles set out below, which form an integral part of the Recommendation, in furthering their air pollution control policies.

II. INSTRUCTS the Environment Committee:

1. To continue its work on control strategies for major air pollutants, taking into account on-going work in this field in other international fora;

2. To provide for continued exchange of information on technical and non-technical means of obtaining efficient reduction of air pollution;

3. To assess Member countries' progress in implementing this Recommendation.

III. REQUESTS the International Energy Agency to take this Recommendation into account and to continue its co-operation with the Environment Committee in its work in this field.

ANNEX

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. General

- a) Introduction of relatively inexpensive measures to reduce these pollutants, for example, use of lower sulphur fuels, more coal cleaning, desulphurisation and blending of some fuel oils, or boiler design modifications to reduce nitrogen oxide formation.
- b) Development of innovative regulatory schemes that can improve efficiency or flexibility of compliance while achieving regulatory goals.
- c) Better enforcement of compliance with existing emission control regulations for both stationary sources and vehicles.
- d) Increased efficiency of energy production and use, such as application of waste heat from electricity generation and steam production to industrial or residential/commercial use, improved building insulation, use of heat pumps, more efficient vehicle engines and design, better industrial processes, and other means.
- e) Increased use of district heating systems with adequate pollution control or other less polluting energy systems, in urban areas where they are practicable and economically feasible, and can replace dispersed fossil fuel heating installations.
- f) Regulations to ensure availability and use of clean fuels for combustion installations or against use of polluting fuels where emission controls are not usually economically feasible (e.g. small central heating boilers).

2. Pollution Control Technologies

- a) Encouragement and incentives for research and development of efficient advanced technologies for pollution control before and during fossil fuel combustion and for control of pollutant emissions after combustion.
- b) Encouragement and incentives for the development of new cost-effective fossil fuel combustion technologies and for the improvement of existing technologies, to achieve a more effective reduction of air pollutant emissions.
- c) Support for the commercialisation and market penetration of new combustion technologies which are environmentally less polluting than existing ones.
- d) Encouragement and incentives for the development and application of improved coal beneficiation and fuel oil refining technologies.

3. Large Stationary Installations

- a) Implementation of emission standards by an effective programme of control measures for large stationary installations, consistent with the use of the best available and economically feasible technologies, and with the target, through national policies and programmes, of achieving the reduction of total national emissions required to reach environmentally acceptable air quality and deposition levels, and where appropriate with a transitional regime for existing plants.
- b) Encouragement or incentives (e.g. tax, investment, loan or grant) for timely retirement or modernisation of older, more polluting installations, to the extent that this does not conflict with other economic policies.

4. Mobile Sources

- a) Implementation as soon as practicable of internationally harmonized emission standards by category for major air pollutants from vehicles, implying for many countries substantive reduction of pollutant emissions by using the best available and economically feasible technology.
- b) Encouragement and incentives for the development of less polluting and more efficient engines and vehicles.
- c) Promotion of good vehicle maintenance.
- d) Encouragement and incentives for the use of less polluting fuels for transportation (for example, liquified petroleum gas and compressed natural gas), where technologically and economically feasible.
- e) Regulations or other incentives to ensure the availability and use of unleaded gasoline as soon as possible and to phase out leaded gasoline as a long-term goal.
- f) Encouragement and incentives for the use of public transportation where appropriate.
- g) Setting and enforcement of speed limits for driving, especially on highways, if such limits contribute to a relevant reduction of air pollution.
- h) Traffic management in urban areas.

5. Information Needs

- a) Improvement of the air pollutant emissions data base by adopting comparable techniques and methods of measuring emissions, and providing reliable emissions inventories.
- b) Continuous monitoring of air pollutant emissions.
- c) Continuing international research co-ordination and exchange of information.
- d) Encouragement for the transfer between countries of available technologies and methods to reduce air pollution.
- e) International co-operation on research and development to increase the effectiveness and to reduce the costs of controlling emissions, particularly for retrofitting existing installations.

6. Monitoring

Monitoring and reporting of the application and effectiveness of these guiding principles on a national basis.

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