

Commissioner Margot Wallstrom
The European Commission
rue de la Loi 200
Bruxelles

15 March 2004

Dear Commissioner,

AMBIENT AIR QUALITY: LIMIT VALUES FOR NITROGEN DIOXIDE AND OXIDES OF NITROGEN

I am writing to you concerning a number of matters on the limit values for nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen arising from the following directives:

• Council Directive 96/62/EC of 27 September 1996 on ambient air quality assessment and management.

• Council Directive 1999/30/EC of 22 April 1999 on limit values for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air

As regards Directive 96/62/EC, Article 7 requires Member State inter alia to take the necessary measures to ensure compliance with Community limit values for ambient air quality without contravening Community legislation on the protection of safety and health of workers at work. I would be grateful to learn what Community legislation protects workers from exposure at work (including work in the ambient air) to concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen that exceed the Community limit values for ambient air.

As regards Directive 1999/30/EC, Article 10 requires the Commission to submit to the European Parliament and the Council by no later than 31 December 2003 a report on the experience acquired in the application of the Directive, including the results of the most recent scientific research on the effects on human health and ecosystems of exposure to the pollutants (including nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen) to which the Directive applies. I would be grateful to learn when the Commission intends to submit this report.

Article 10 also requires the Commission to examine: (a) the annual limit for the protection of health for nitrogen dioxide and to make a proposal confirming or modifying that value; and (b) the hourly limit value for nitrogen dioxide in the light of World Health Organisation guidelines and consider whether that limit value should be confirmed or altered. I would be grateful to learn when the Commission intends to make a proposal; and whether Member States have made any representations in favour of relaxing the limit values.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP