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Clean fuel infrastructure rules adopted by the Council

The Council today adopted a directive on **building up minimum infrastructure for alternative fuels across the EU** ([PE-CONS 79/14](#); statements: [13267/14 ADD 1](#)).

"With the formal adoption of the directive today, we are taking a decisive step to make the European economy more resource-efficient, less dependent on oil and more attentive to the quality of life of citizens", said Maurizio Lupi, Italian Minister of Infrastructure and Transport.

Today's final adoption of the legislative act by the Council follows an agreement reached at first reading with the European Parliament earlier this year.

The directive will enter into force 20 days after its publication in the EU Official Journal, which is expected to take place within the next few days.

Coordinated roll-out

Under the directive, each member state has two years to draw up an alternative fuel deployment strategy and send it to the Commission. These strategies or "national policy frameworks" will set out the country's national targets for putting in place new recharge and refuelling points for the different types of "clean fuel", such as electricity, hydrogen and natural gas, as well as relevant supporting actions.

The Commission will assist member states in ensuring the coordination and coherence of these measures.

Together, the policy frameworks of all member states will provide long-term security for private and public investment in vehicle and fuel technology and infrastructure roll-out.

The deadlines for having the infrastructure in place range from 2020 to 2030, depending in particular on the type of fuel, vehicle and deployment area. For instance, the directive stipulates that by the end of 2020, member states should install enough recharge and refuelling points so that electric cars and cars using compressed natural gas (CNG) can circulate at least in cities and suburban areas.

Technical standards

Common technical standards are to be applied, making all new recharge and refuelling points interoperable.

Funding of the new measures

Private investment is expected to play a key role in the build-up of alternative fuels infrastructure. Support measures by member states are possible, in compliance with EU state aid rules. In addition, relevant actions are eligible for EU funding from the Connecting Europe Facility and Horizon 2020.

Background

Creating a sufficient network of recharging and refuelling stations is considered crucial in order to drive consumer demand for vehicles powered by clean fuel, and to encourage manufacturers to develop such vehicles and to sell them at competitive prices.

Currently the use of clean fuel is being held back by the high cost of vehicles, low demand and the lack of infrastructure. This is creating a vicious circle: refuelling stations are not being built because there are not enough vehicles; vehicles are not being sold at competitive prices because there is not enough demand; consumers are not buying the vehicles because they are expensive and the stations are not there.

The new directive aims to break this vicious circle, thus reducing transport's dependence on oil and cutting back its greenhouse gas emissions. It also intends to promote economic growth and job creation in the EU, in particular in small and medium-sized enterprises.

According to Commission estimates, alternative fuels gradually coming onto the market are expected to produce savings on the EU oil bill amounting to about €2.3 billion per year in 2030, and another €1 billion per year from the dampening of price fluctuations through improved security of energy supply.

