

CLEAN AIR IS NOT AN OPTION, IT'S A NECESSITY

A holistic plan to improve the quality of our air

Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council relating to limit values for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air 1999/30/EC

Consultation Paper on Malta's Air Quality Plan

Summary

The purpose of this public participation exercise is to invite and involve the general public, local councils, NGOs and government entities to suggest realistic policy measures that will help contribute towards decreasing and limiting concentrations of fine dust in ambient air as required by Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 1999/30/EC. These suggestions will form part of the Air Quality Plan that MEPA is currently compiling.

This exercise is the first of a two-phased consultation process. This first phase is involving the general public and stakeholders in the drafting of the air quality plan, while the second will involve the receipt of comments on the draft plan compiled by MEPA.

Member States are required according to EU law to submit an air quality plan outlining measures for the reduction of fine dust in ambient air, with the aim to achieve the limit values outlined in the Directive.

The public participation exercise will run till 22nd May 2009.

How to respond

During the consultation period, the Malta Environment and Planning Authority will ensure that both the public and stakeholders will become aware of this exercise and its purpose, through the media and other communication measures. The Authority is also providing the public (Section 3) with a list of questions that can guide and assist them in proposing suggestions that can be included in this Plan.

Submissions by the public or other interested parties can be sent to:

Director of Environment Protection
Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA)
P.O. Box 200, Marsa, MRS 1000

Or by email at: airqualityplan@mepa.org.mt.

All submissions need to reach the Authority by 22nd May 2009.

Section 1: Background Information

- 1.1 The Malta Environment and Planning Authority is the Competent Authority of the Air Quality Framework Directive (AQFD) 1996/62/EC and four Daughter Directives (Council Directive 1999/30/EC relating to limit values for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air; Council Directive 2000/69/EC relating to limit values for benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air; Council Directive 2002/3/EC relating to ozone in ambient air; Council Directive 2004/107/EC relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air). The aim of these directives is to keep the concentrations of specific air pollutants within the specified limits in the directives.
- 1.2 The first Daughter Directive regulates fine dust or particulate matter (PM₁₀) in ambient air, amongst other pollutants. The negative implications PM₁₀ has on human health and the environment are well known nowadays, especially when the fine dust is the product of combustion and thus consists of heavy metals and other harmful substances. Man-made sources of fine dust include power generation, traffic, the construction industry, and other small industrial sources.
- 1.3 Malta has had difficulty in complying with the acceptable level of pollution for fine dust since 2004 and is still experiencing problems up to this date. The Directive allows Member States to exceed the acceptable level of fine dust monitored over one day for 35 days in one year. Malta has exceeded this limit. Figure 1 below compares the number of exceedances of the PM₁₀ daily acceptable level in 2007 in four different air monitoring stations placed in different locations around the Maltese Islands:

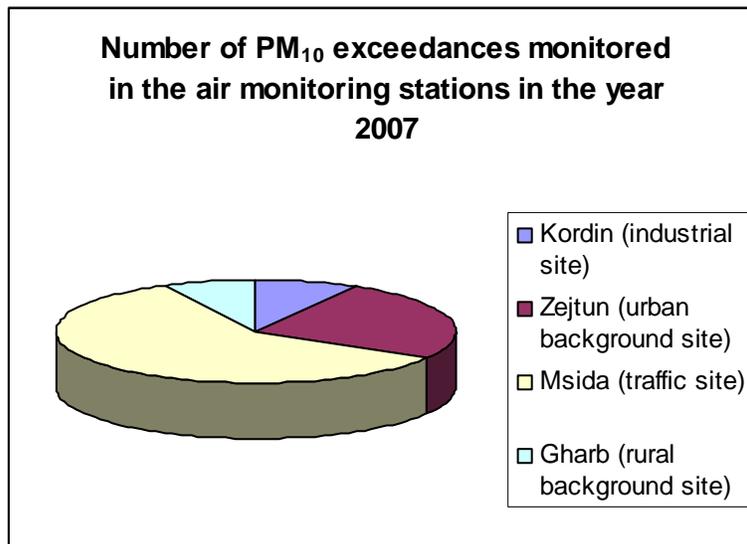


Figure 1: Number of PM₁₀ exceedances recorded in four air monitoring stations in the year 2007

- 1.4 It is quite clear that the largest number of exceedances is present at the traffic site. In fact, this amount surpasses the allowed number of exceedances by Directive 1999/30/EC in one year.

Section 2: What needs to be done?

- 2.1 All Member States had to achieve this acceptable level of pollution by 1st January 2005. Article 22 of the new Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe 2008/50/EC will replace the AQFD and 3 of the daughter directives on the 11th June 2010. It gives provisions to Member States to apply for an extension of the deadline to meet the acceptable level of pollution for PM₁₀. Member States can only obtain an extension of the deadline if, amongst other requests, they are able to prove that by means of a sound air quality plan demonstrate how conformity will be achieved before the new deadline, being May 2011.
- 2.2 Efforts should be made by all pollution sources; however the biggest effort should be focused on the transport sector since monitoring data clearly shows that this sector is the main contributor to air pollution.

Section 3: The Consultation Questions

- 3.1 What measures would you suggest in the transport sector in the short and medium term for effective reduction of particulate matter concentrations (levels of fine dust)?
- 3.2 What measures would you suggest in the construction sector in the short and medium term for effective reduction of particulate matter concentrations (levels of fine dust)?
- 3.3 What measures would you suggest in the power generation sector in the short and medium term for effective reduction of particulate matter concentrations (levels of fine dust)?
- 3.4 What measures would you suggest for small industry in the short and medium term for effective reduction of particulate matter concentrations (levels of fine dust)?
- 3.5 Which of the above sector/s do you think should be given priority in contributing to measures for the improvement of air quality?