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NOTE

from:	General Secretariat
to:	Delegations
Subject:	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sound level of motor vehicles - Information from the Dutch delegation

Delegations will find annexed an information note from the Dutch delegation on the above mentioned subject, which will be dealt with under "other business" at the Environment Council meeting on 9 March 2012.

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sound level of motor vehicles

- Information from the Dutch delegation -

Introduction

On 9 December 2011, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sound levels of motor vehicles. This proposal will be discussed within the Council by the Motor Vehicles Working Group.

Key message

The Commission proposes more stringent noise requirements for cars, vans and trucks, in two steps within a short time frame. Traffic can become substantially less noisy. The Netherlands supports these requirements because of the serious health effects and the abatement costs connected with noisy traffic. To have a balanced discussion between the interests of health, profits and costs to industry, the Netherlands thinks it is important that environment ministers are made aware of the significance of this file and are involved in establishing the national position on this file.

The Commission proposals will result in a noise reduction of about 3 dB. The result could even be improved on if the decision making process were to lead to :

1. More stringent noise emission limit values to be attained in two steps as proposed by the Commission;
2. An additional third step for passenger cars reflecting the current state of technology; and
3. More stringent requirements for the tyre aftermarket; an evaluation this year is already foreseen in the tyre regulation (661/2009/EC).

Background information

Noise can cause serious health damage comparable to that caused by particles. Nuisance and sleep disturbance cause stress which can have serious effects on health. Traffic is the main source of noise in Europe and the recent noise mapping of European cities shows how many people are affected by high levels. Studies show source abatement is cost-effective and producing more silent vehicles is the most cost efficient way to improve the situation.

The present noise emission levels came into force in 1996. The Netherlands welcomes the Commission's proposal for effective steps to be taken in a short time frame based on a method which covers almost all driving conditions:

	2 years	5 years
cars	2 dB	4 dB
trucks	2 dB	3 dB

Although the silent vehicles of today are not more expensive than the noisier ones, industry will incur additional costs due to changes in design and production lines. These costs are expected to be 6 billion euro for the vehicle industry and 5 billion for the tyre industry over a period of 30 years.

A major health improvement is foreseen. According to the background study, noise abatement will lead to benefits in the EU put at 123 billion euro, as well as an increase in property value. The cost-benefit ratio is calculated at 10; that is, the benefits outweigh the costs 10 times.

The Netherlands fully supports the Commission proposal. About 10% of new cars are already more silent than required by the second step. The Netherlands favours a third noise reduction step, with a reasonable time for its entry into force.

The new measurement method is also supported. It is expected that the recent improvements agreed upon by UNECE will also be discussed in the Council.