

Finland

The Air Pollution Control Programme 2010

In September 2002, the Finnish Government approved a national programme setting maximum annual limits for emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, ammonia and volatile organic compounds to be complied with from 2010 onwards. The programme contains measures to reduce emissions from energy production, transport, agriculture and industry, and also sets out ways to curb emissions from machinery, leisure boats and the small-scale combustion of wood.

The Air Pollution Control Programme 2010 has been specifically designed to transpose the European Union National Emission Ceilings Directive. The implementation of this directive throughout Europe should reduce the emissions and subsequent atmospheric deposition of pollutants that cause eutrophication and acidification in Finland, while also curbing long-range ozone and particle pollution, and thus improving air quality.

Achieving these targets must involve co-ordinated international action in addition to measures taken in Finland, since a considerable proportion of the air pollution that causes problems in Finland actually originates from other European countries.

Targets

The National Emission Ceilings Directive obliges EU member countries to cut emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), ammonia (NH₃), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) with the exception of methane (CH₄), to certain limits, which must not be exceeded after 2010. These substances can be transported for long distances in the atmosphere, and they may result in acidification, the formation of ozone near ground level, eutrophication or the formation of secondary aerosol particles. Where these forms of pollution are concerned, the locations of emission sources and geographical connections with the affected sensitive areas or human populations are highly significant – in contrast with the global nature of the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.

Planned emission cuts

The Air Pollution Control Programme 2010 is largely based on existing and previously planned measures, and other EU legislation soon due to come into effect. The programme contains measures to reduce emissions from energy production, traffic, agriculture and industry, and also sets out ways to curb emissions from machinery, leisure boats and the small-scale combustion of wood.

Estimates of the emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, ammonia and VOCs in Finland in 2010, and information about the measures planned to curb them were all compiled during summer 2002 by a working group set up by the Ministry of the Environment, also containing representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The working group also assessed information on models and scenarios prepared by experts from the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) and the Technical Research Centre of Finland (VTT).

The first annual report on the emissions covered by the directive was submitted to the European Commission in December 2002, together with the Air Pollution Control Programme 2010.

Monitoring the implementation of the programme

The Ministry of the Environment and other stakeholders are closely monitoring the implementation of the Air Pollution Control Programme 2010. Monitoring is particularly important concerning the possible impacts of Kyoto mechanisms and EU emissions trading, the implementation of the Large Combustion Plants Directive, and the renewal of Finland's motor vehicle fleet. If necessary, a revised programme may be prepared by 1 October 2006 under the supervision of the Ministry of the Environment.