# COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

## of 29 June 1978

## on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning the lead content of petrol

(78/611/EEC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 100 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament (1),

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee (2),

Whereas the protection and improvement of public health and of the environment currently constitutes a major preoccupation common to all industrialized countries and pollution caused by products emitted in the exhaust gas of vehicles has reached a disquieting level owing to the continuous increase in the density of motor traffic; whereas, following the introduction of measures in Directive 70/220/EEC (3), as last amended by Directive 77/102/EEC (4), designed to curb air pollution caused by the emission of carbon monoxide, unburned hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxide from motor vehicles, action should be taken at this stage with a view to limiting lead particle emissions by such vehicles, the lead in question deriving from plumbiferous petrol additives acting as an anti-knock agent;

Whereas the national laws concerning the composition of petrol, and in particular the rules governing the limitations of the lead content in motor vehicle petrol, vary from one Member State to another; whereas such differences directly affect the proper functioning of the common market;

Whereas, owing to the important effect of lead upon public health and the environment, it is necessary to reduce the lead content of petrol at Community level;

Whereas the financial, economic, industrial and qualitative consequences of a reduction of the level of lead in petrol to a maximum value of between 0·40 g/l and a value of 0·15 g/l have demonstrated that such a reduction is feasible within a relatively short period;

Whereas lead is only one of the constituent elements in the composition of petrol; whereas the reduction of this element must not have the effect of aggravating the air pollution by other pollutants which would be one of the main consequences of any modification in this composition;

Whereas detailed studies of the various aspects of the measures which might serve to reduce atmospheric lead should be continued at Community level; whereas Member States should for this purpose provide the Commission with relevant information;

Whereas the reduction of the lead content of petrol raises specific technical and economic problems in Ireland; whereas a temporary derogation for that country should not have severe repercussions on trade in petrol given that Irish refining installations at present only partially cover domestic requirements and that all petrol exported by that country to another Member State will have to comply with the provisions of the Directive which apply in that State; whereas there should therefore be a derogation from the provisions concerning the reduction of the lead content of petrol in Ireland;

Whereas a sudden change in the supply of crude oil or petroleum products in clearly defined circumstances could lead a Member State to authorize an increase in the lead content of petrol; whereas an appropriate procedure should therefore be laid down for such a situation,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

*Article 1*

For the purpose of this Directive, 'petrol' means any fuel intended for the operation of internal combustion spark-ignited engines used for the propulsion of vehicles.

(1) OJ No C 280, 8. 12. 1975, p. 9.
(2) OJ No C 116, 30. 9. 1974, p. 18.
(3) OJ No L 76, 6. 4. 1970, p. 1.
(4) OJ No L 32, 3. 2. 1977, p. 32.