



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, XXX
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COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) .../...

of XXX

laying down rules for the application of Directive (EU) 2024/2881 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the requirements for projections provided as a reason for postponement of the deadline for attaining compliance with the limit values for certain pollutants and information to be included in implementation reports

This draft has not been adopted or endorsed by the European Commission. Any views expressed are the preliminary views of the Commission services and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the Commission.

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Directive (EU) 2024/2881 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe¹, and in particular Article 18(5) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Directive (EU) 2024/2881 establishes air quality standards with the aim of ensuring a high level of protection for human health and the environment. Those standards include the limit values set out in Section 1, Table 1, of Annex I to that Directive ('limit values'), which are to be attained by 1 January 2030.
- (2) Pursuant to Article 18 of Directive (EU) 2024/2881, Member States may notify the Commission that they intend to postpone the deadline for attaining compliance with the limit values for particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2,5}), nitrogen dioxide, benzene or benzo(a)pyrene in zones where those limit values cannot be complied with by the attainment deadline. Member States are to provide the Commission with all the information it needs to carry out its assessment, including air quality projections underpinning an air quality roadmap.
- (3) Projections performed for the purposes of Article 18 of Directive (EU) 2024/2881 consist of a numerical estimation of the future evolution of concentration levels of the relevant pollutant in a specific zone based on emission scenarios to enable an assessment of future estimated concentration levels. For that purpose, projections are a tool with which to assess in a transparent, internally consistent, complete and precise manner what can be expected to happen in the respective zone, if actions and measures to influence the air pollutant concentration levels are implemented. To that end they should rely on objective and scientific methods to

¹ OJ L, 2024/2881, 20.11.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/2881/OJ>.

assess 2024/2881² in support of air quality plans and air quality roadmaps, and to ensure the reliability of those projections, it is appropriate to establish technical details on the use of fit-for-purpose modelling applications and to detail the main parameters of the projections, including a clearly identified and sufficiently defined list of measures included as input to the projections.

- (4) The projected impacts of pollution abatement measures constitute a key piece of information underpinning the air quality roadmap insofar as they show how compliance with limit values will be attained as soon as possible and no later than by the end of the postponed attainment deadline, taking into account reasonable and proportionate measures. The parameters used to perform those projections, including the measures introduced as input parameters, play a decisive role in the outcome of the projections. While Section B of Annex VIII to Directive (EU) 2024/2881 includes an indicative list of air pollution abatement measures, Member States have a certain degree of discretion in deciding, in the light of the principle of proportionality and taking into consideration all relevant circumstances, whether those measures or other measures, are the most appropriate to ensure that the exceedance of limit values is remedied as soon as possible.
- (5) In its Clean Air Outlook reports, the Commission regularly assesses the prospects of achieving the objectives of Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Council and the Parliament³ on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants for 2030 and beyond, by assessing the reduction of emissions of air pollutants and subsequent impacts on air quality, health, ecosystems and the economy. In the interest of simplification, Member States should be able to use the projections from the Clean Air Outlook reports for the baseline scenario. It is equally appropriate for Member States to develop an alternative baseline scenario based on national or local air pollutant emissions and air quality levels.
- (6) Pursuant to Article 18(3), point (a), of Directive (EU) 2024/2881, Member States that postpone the attainment deadline have to demonstrate that the measures included in the relevant air quality roadmap are being implemented by providing a concise and

² European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Air quality modelling for air quality policy - Technical support document on the use of modelling for various application domains under the Ambient Air Quality Directive*, April 2025, ISBN 978-92-68-27 149-0.

³ Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Council and the Parliament of 14 December 2016 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC (OJ L 344, 17.12.2016, p 1).

comprehensive implementation report on a two-and-a-half year basis. That report is to be communicated to the Commission within two months of its adoption and for the first time by 30 June 2031. The Commission is to provide Member States with a list of information to be included in their implementing reports. In order to demonstrate the implementation of the air quality roadmap, that list should contain information on the status of implementation of the measures, the progress in achieving the air quality standard concerned and updated projections.

- (7) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Ambient Air Quality Committee,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Use of fit-for-purpose air quality modelling applications

1. Member States shall ensure that modelling applications used in projections performed for the purpose of Article 18(1) of Directive (EU) 2024/2881 fulfil the following conditions:
 - (a) the modelling application is able to reproduce results with the same averaging periods as the limit values which cannot be achieved by the deadline;
 - (b) the modelling application only uses percentile relations between annual means and short-term values for the assessment of the hourly, daily eight-hour, and daily limit or target values if the robustness of the percentile relations is verified by measurements;
 - (c) the spatial resolution of the modelling application is such that the expected variability of pollutant concentrations in the atmosphere can be reproduced, to the extent possible;
 - (d) all relevant emission sources are adequately represented, to the extent possible;
 - (e) to the extent possible and where relevant, the following elements are considered by the modelling application, depending on the area of interest:
 - (i) site-specific dispersion characteristics;
 - (ii) orographic boundary conditions;
 - (iii) meteorological conditions;
 - (iv) adverse climatic conditions;
 - (v) transboundary contributions.
2. Where possible, all input datasets shall be quality controlled and quality assured before each modelling application is applied. Where input datasets relate to future activity levels, policies or projections, Member States shall document the source of the data and the main assumptions made.

Article 2

Reference year and projection years

1. Member States shall designate a specific year in the past as a reference year for their projections and use it as a benchmark for comparison across scenarios. Where appropriate, Member States shall use as a reference year the most recent year for which air pollutant emissions and concentrations are both available. Member States may however use air pollutant emissions from a year other than the reference year, provided that they provide justification for using them and demonstrate that they are representative of the reference year.
2. Member States shall provide projections for the year 2030, for the year in which compliance is projected to be achieved and, where that year is later than 2035, for an intermediate year.
3. Member States may rely on projected intermediate years or a linear reduction to establish their indicative trajectory towards compliance.
4. Member States shall ensure that the baseline scenario and compliance scenario are comparable.

Article 3

Baseline scenario

1. Member States shall produce a baseline scenario showing the expected development of air pollutant emissions and air quality levels based on measures that have already been adopted, that is based on emissions and air quality levels in the reference year established in accordance with Article 2(1).
2. When performing projections of concentrations, Member States shall provide, for each projected year under the baseline scenario, a numerical value corresponding to the highest projected concentration of the pollutant at a sampling point location in the zone or to the highest projected number of days or hours in exceedance of an air quality standard covered by the postponement notification.
3. Member States may use the latest baseline scenario developed by the Commission in the most recently published Clean Air Outlook report. Where a Member State uses a baseline scenario other than the one developed by the Commission in that report, it shall provide a description of that baseline scenario. That description shall include the following information, where relevant:
 - (a) the reference year;
 - (b) the policies and measures included;
 - (c) the underlying assumptions made;
 - (d) whether and how transboundary contributions have been considered;
 - (e) whether contributions from natural sources have been considered.

Compliance scenario

1. Member States shall produce a compliance scenario which shall show how the limit values are expected to be attained taking into account reasonable and proportionate measures, and which shall be based on emissions and air quality levels for the reference year established in accordance with Article 2(1).
2. When preparing projections of concentrations, Member States shall define the underlying assumptions and key input and output parameters for the compliance scenario. Input parameters shall include the definition of reasonable and proportionate measures in terms of their main features and, to the extent possible, as regards their geographical extent, timeline for implementation, mandatory or voluntary nature and accompanying measures and arrangements to support implementation. Member States shall include in the input parameters for the projections in the compliance scenario at least those measures that, taking into account all relevant circumstances, each satisfy all the following conditions:
 - (a) there is evidence, including in light of proven technological developments, of the effectiveness of the measure in reducing concentrations of the relevant pollutant;
 - (b) the measure does not incur costs or adverse socio-economic impacts that outweigh the health and environmental benefits of implementing it;
 - (c) the measure does not impose significant restrictions or burdens on individuals, businesses or industrial installations, including significant impacts on personal mobility, on the transport of goods and freight in the affected area or on the residual operating life of industrial installations, having regard to the objective to be achieved, the extent and anticipated duration of the exceedance and the population exposed to it;
 - (d) there is no other similarly effective measure, including innovative solutions, adaptations to or closure of existing facilities or other actions supporting industrial transformation, that is currently or imminently available, and that will be included as input parameter for the projections in the compliance scenario;
 - (e) the measure does not merely result in displacement of the air pollutant emissions leading to a disproportionate increase of air pollutant concentrations or an exceedance of an air quality standard at other locations.
3. When performing projections of concentrations, Member States shall provide, for each projected year under the compliance scenario, numerical values corresponding to the projected concentrations at all sampling points exceeding the air quality standards covered by the postponement notification or to the number of days or hours in exceedance of the air quality standards covered by the postponement notification.

Member States shall document and, where relevant, carry out quality assurance on the main assumptions underpinning the results of the compliance scenario, and identify and discuss the most relevant uncertainty drivers for the projected attainment year. Uncertainty drivers may include uncertainty as to the quantification of future emissions, the meteorological data selected for use in the projections, the possible

application of bias correction to future scenarios, possible scenarios for long range transport of air pollutants and background concentrations.

Article 5

Information to be included in the implementation reports

Member States shall include in their implementation reports referred to in Article 18(3), point (a), of Directive (EU) 2024/2881 the information listed in the Annex to this Decision.

Article 6

Entry into force

This Decision shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission
The President
Ursula VON DER LEYEN