



INT/953
NRMM emissions/COVID-19 effects

OPINION

European Economic and Social Committee

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2016/1628 as regards the transitional provisions of certain machinery fitted with engines in the power range between 56kW and 130kW, and above 300kW in order to address the impact of the COVID-19 crisis

[COM(2021) 254 final – 2021/0129 (COD)]

Rapporteur: **Christophe LEFÈVRE**

Referral	European Parliament, 20/05/2021 Council, 25/05/2021
Legal basis	Article 114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
Section responsible	Single Market, Production and Consumption
President's decision	20/05/2021
Adopted at plenary	09/06/2021
Plenary session No	561
Outcome of vote (for/against/abstentions)	206/1/11

1. **Conclusions and recommendations**

- 1.1 In the light of the COVID-19 crisis, which has caused a major disruption of supply chains for manufacturers of non-road mobile machinery (NRMM), the EESC has looked into the proposal to extend some of the deadlines set in Regulation (EU) 2016/1628 and subsequently in Regulation (EU) 2020/1040.
- 1.2 The EESC welcomes the new proposal for a regulation, which it deems to be an appropriate and proportionate response to the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.
- 1.3 The six-month extension for the manufacture of non-road mobile machinery fitted with "transition engines" and the nine-month extension for the placing on the market, instead of 12 months for both in 2020, are therefore warranted and balanced.
- 1.4 While the EESC reiterates the need to contribute to meeting the EU's air quality targets, it also believes that the proposal guarantees the smooth operation of the market, while ensuring both economic balance for the parties concerned and a high level of public health and environmental protection.

2. **Gist of the Commission proposal**

- 2.1 Regulation (EU) 2016/1628 sets out new emissions limits ("Stage V"), designed to reduce the emissions of air pollutants from engines for non-road mobile machinery (NRMM), and provides some lead time to make this transition.
- 2.2 The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted supply chains considerably, with an impact on the ability of NRMM manufacturers to meet some of the deadlines set by Regulation 2016/1628.
- 2.3 This Regulation was thus amended by Regulation (EU) 2020/1040, which provided for the postponement of certain deadlines that manufacturers could no longer meet without sustaining serious economic damage due to the unexpected disruptions in the supply chain. Manufacturers were granted an additional period of twelve months for the production and placing on the market of machinery fitted with "transition engines" with a power range of between 56 kW and 130 kW, the production of which was to be completed by 30 June 2020, and the placing on the market by 31 December 2020 at the latest.
- 2.4 However, due to the continued supply chain and production disruptions caused by the COVID-19 second and third waves, manufacturers will not be able to meet the 2021 deadlines applicable to machinery fitted with transition engines in the power range between 56 kW and 130 kW, and above 300 kW without sustaining serious economic damage.
- 2.5 These dates must therefore be extended, to avoid a situation in which transition engines, (the numbers of which are capped), can no longer be fitted in the machinery in time and therefore have to be scrapped.

2.6 While there are still supply chain and productions distortions, they cannot be compared with the ones that prevailed in spring 2020. For these reasons, a six-month extension for the manufacture of machinery fitted with those engines and a nine-month extension for their placing on the market, instead of 12 months for both in 2020, are warranted.

2.7 Finally, the proposed extension will also apply to agricultural and forestry vehicles fitted with transition engines, as they are subject to NRMM provisions on pollutant emissions.

3. **General comments**

3.1 The EESC reiterates its frequently stated belief that reducing harmful emissions of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons and particulates from the engines of non-road mobile machinery is a vital step towards achieving the EU's air quality targets.

3.2 In its opinion on Regulation (EU) 2016/1628, the EESC recommended rapid approval of the new regulation in view of the strong public health concerns about nanoparticles resulting from combustion processes and the high level of protection that can be achieved by implementing the proposed Stage V for NRMM engines.

3.3 However, the EESC is well aware that the COVID-19 crisis has caused significant disruptions to the supply chain and production, which are continuing due to the second and third waves, and that manufacturers will consequently not be able to meet the 2021 deadlines without suffering serious economic damage.

3.4 Furthermore, the EESC is fully aware that the crisis was not and could not have been foreseen and that these are quite exceptional circumstances. The EESC thus recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic represents a major challenge for the vast majority of European economic sectors.

3.5 The EESC therefore supports the extension of six months for the manufacture of machinery fitted with these engines and the extension of nine months for placing on the market instead of twelve months for both in 2020.

3.6 In the EESC's view, this is a reasonable and proportionate measure aimed at ensuring the smooth operation of the internal market, the economic equilibrium of the parties concerned and a high level of public health and environmental protection.

Brussels, 9 June 2021.

Christa SCHWENG

The president of the European Economic and Social Committee
