

## Consultation strategy

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Fitness Check of the Ambient Air Quality (AAQ) Directives</b>
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Over the last three decades, the EU has developed a three-pronged EU Clean Air policy framework aimed at protecting citizens across the European Union from significant adverse health impacts, as well as impacts on ecosystem services (notably vegetation including crops) caused by air pollutants. The three pillars of this framework are:</p> <p>(a) setting ambient air quality standards established for twelve key air pollutants deemed to be most relevant; i.e. sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and nitrogen oxides, particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>), ozone, benzene, lead, carbon monoxide, arsenic, cadmium, nickel, and benzo(a)pyrene i.e. via Directive 2008/50/EC and Directive 2004/107/EC, the so-called Ambient Air Quality (AAQ) Directives, to be attained across the EU territory;</p> <p>(b) setting national emission limits for the most important trans-boundary air pollutants (i.e. via Directive 2016/2284 on National Emission Ceilings, which has been recently revised to include 2020 and 2030 targets); these are expected to put concentrations on a downward trend and closer to air quality standards; and</p> <p>(c) establishing emission standards for key pollution sources e.g. via legislation on fuel quality, vehicle emissions, industrial emissions, etc.</p> <p>The air policy review of 2013 (Clean Air for Europe - <a href="#">COM (2013) 918</a>) provided a comprehensive evaluation of the EU air quality policy approach, and resulted in new emission reduction targets under Directive <a href="#">2016/2284</a> on updated National Emission Ceilings and new provisions in medium-combustion plants. This fitness check will focus on the two AAQ Directives and the corresponding Implementing Decision (2011/850/EC) and the Commission Directive EU/2015/1480, and will not seek to address the other two areas of the EU clean air policy framework (i.e. national emission limits and emission standards for key pollution sources).</p> <p>The AAQ Directives are guided by a need to reduce air pollution to levels which minimise harmful effects on human health, paying particular attention to sensitive populations, and the environment as a whole, to improve the monitoring and assessment of air quality and to provide information to the public.</p> <p>The Directives set common methods and criteria to assess air quality in all Member States in a comparable and reliable manner. Member States then designate zones and agglomerations throughout their territory and classify them according to prescribed assessment thresholds and provide air quality assessments underpinned by measurement, modelling and/or objective estimation, or a combination of these.</p> <p>The Directives define standards for ambient air quality for key air pollutants to be attained by all Member States across their territories against certain timelines. In case these standards are not met, the Directives require Member States to prepare and implement air quality plans and measures (for a given pollutant). The Directives leave the choice of means to achieve these standards to the Member States, but do explicitly require that exceedance periods are kept as short as possible.</p> <p>Member States are required to report 'up to date' air quality measurements, the results of air quality assessment on an annual basis, as well as information on the plans and programmes they establish in a harmonized manner – both to the Commission as well as to stakeholders and the general public.</p>

Objective of the consultation	
<b>Goal:</b>	<p>Member States and stakeholders at large will be consulted to:</p> <p>(a) gather specialised and factual information, data and knowledge about the implementation of various aspects of the AAQ Directives with the view to fill any potential information/data gaps in the course of the Fitness Check, and inform the analysis of the different criteria to be analysed under the Fitness Check.</p> <p>(b) to express their views and opinions on the extent to which these Directives have successfully met, or are on track, to meet their different objectives.</p>
<b>Scope:</b>	<p>The consultation will focus on gathering stakeholders responses on the following aspects:</p> <p>(i) awareness of the air quality issues in general and knowledge of the directives' provisions;</p> <p>(ii) views regarding contribution of directives to improved air quality;</p> <p>(iii) specific questions aimed at gathering views and data related to the individual fitness check criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU value-added to fill in potential Commission data gaps.</p>

Identification of stakeholders	
<b>Stakeholders:</b>	<p>For this Fitness Check, we have identified four broad categories of stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public authorities, including those with responsibility in enforcing the provisions in the Member States, at different governance levels (national, regional, local), other national, regional and local institutions (e.g. Parliaments), EEA countries, environment agencies and other relevant public bodies, international organisations;</li> <li>• Private economic sectors operators and their trade organisation representatives (hereafter "business and trade organisations"), affected by the Directives, etc.</li> <li>• Civil society representatives, research community, academia</li> <li>• Citizens</li> </ul>
<b>Mapping:</b>	<p>The chart in the Annex maps the stakeholders according to their (presumed) level of influence and level of interest.</p>

Consultation methods and tools	
<b>Methods and tools:</b>	<p>The consultation will aim to ensure that, for each Member States, at least the competent authorities responsible for EU air quality legislation, another sectoral public authority, a relevant NGO and a representative of business and trade organisations are consulted. In selecting the business and trade organisations stakeholders, care will be given to ensure that different economic interests are represented, and ensure a balanced representation of views. The consultation should also aim to cover different territorial levels, and pay special regard to areas that are facing air quality problems.</p> <p>Based on the objective and scope outlines above, the following complementary activities will form the core of the consultation strategy:</p>

	<p><b>1. An open public consultation allowing the interested public and stakeholders to express their views</b></p> <p>The open public consultation is expected to be launched by end of April 2018. It will comprise two questionnaires: one, more general, addressed to the general public, and another one, with more specialised questions, for authorities in the Member States, enforcement bodies, regional and local authorities, business and trade organisations' representatives and civil society organisations, academia, relevant international organisations, etc.. The scope of the consultation will cover all the main elements of the fitness check in order to get stakeholders' views on the five evaluation criteria and gather further evidence on these aspects.</p> <p><b>2. Targeted stakeholder consultation, addressed at selected stakeholders in all Member States and at EU level. This will be carried out using interviews and focus groups</b></p> <p>For this part of the consultation process, a combination of interviews and Focus Groups will be used. Interviews will consist of one-on-one conversations, or individual written contributions, based on a standard template, allowing in-depth responses to the evaluation questions and eventual inquiries to complement the answers with additional knowledge and views held by the representative interviewed. They will be used where extensive understanding of inputs from the specific stakeholder is required. On the other hand, focus groups will be used on topics and areas where a discussion might be beneficial, and to reach related groups of stakeholders in one setting.</p> <p>Specific workshops are also envisaged throughout the process, such as a workshop in the context of Green Week 2018, one with the Ambient Air Quality Expert Group (MSs representatives), and dedicated workshops with industry organisations and civil society representatives.</p> <p><b>3. Stakeholder workshops in order to confirm the scope and the hypotheses of the Fitness check and in order to validate the findings towards the end of the process</b></p> <p>As part of the Fitness Check two stakeholder workshops will be organised. The workshops will be attended by approximately 250 participants, representing all EU Member States. Participants should cover national, regional and local governments, environmental and other public bodies, representatives of the business and trade organisations, civil society and other organisations, such as international bodies (WHO), academia and the research community.</p> <p>The purpose of the 1<sup>st</sup> workshop will be to assist in gathering evidence, to confirm the issues for the evaluation and to raise awareness of the evaluation. The purpose of the 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop will be to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation to stakeholders with a view to ensuring that: 1) important findings were not overlooked in the conclusions; 2) there was no misrepresentation of evidence in findings; 3) adequate regard was given to the different inputs and evidence supporting different views; and 4) validation of the findings following the targeted stakeholder consultation process.</p>
<b>Accessibility:</b>	The open public consultation will be open to everyone and give the respondents the opportunity to provide their views on the subject of the Fitness Check.. The open public consultation questionnaires will be written in plain language and be

	<p>translated into all EU languages.</p> <p>All additional documentation will be provided in English. Written contributions in other EU official languages will be accepted and treated in the same manner as the ones written in English, and this will be clearly indicated on the consultation web page.</p> <p>Targeted questionnaires will be distributed as widely as possible to the interested groups of stakeholders. For the more targeted consultation of stakeholders, via interviews and Focus Group, various EU languages will be used as much as possible, depending on the interlocutors and their needs.</p> <p>Individual players will be consulted in parallel to their representative organisations (as organisations do not always fully reflect the views of their individual members).</p> <p>On the consultation web page, a call for interest will be published in advance to allow stakeholders to express their interest in being consulted through the targeted consultation.</p>
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#### Consultation website

The open public consultation will be accessible from [Public consultation portal](#), including links to background documents and to specific and relevant websites hosted by the Commission (i.e. DG Environment).

At the end of the consultation process, a synopsis report will be published, summarising all the consultation activities performed and the outcome of the consultation. The summary report of the consultation outcome will be available in all EU languages.

## Annex – Stakeholder mapping



### Consultation strategy – logic and key methods

