

From the Ministries

.CONSULTATION ON DRAFT NOISE ACTION PLANS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has published draft noise action plans for 23 English large urban areas, major roads and major railways, for consultation.

This follows an informal consultation on earlier versions of draft template noise action plans. This gave the public and local authorities the opportunity to comment on the proposed way forward and what information should be included in noise action plans.

Defra will be consulting on:

- the template noise action plan for the 23 agglomerations (an agglomeration is an urban area with a population in excess of 250,000 inhabitants);
 - the draft noise action plan for major roads outside agglomerations (a major road is a road with more than 6 million vehicle journeys a year); and
 - the draft noise action plan for major railways outside agglomerations (a major railway is one that has more than 60,000 rail journeys a year).
- The UK is required to produce noise action plans in order to fulfil its obligations under the Environmental Noise Directive.

The draft noise action plans, associated data and the consultation document can be found at:

www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/noise-action-plan/index.htm

More info: DEFRA, Nobel House,
17 Smith Square, London
SW1P 3JR
Tel: +44(0)8459 335577

TURKEY TO PRODUCE NOISE MAPS OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Turkey's Environment and Forestry Ministry will produce noise maps of areas with more than 100,000 inhabitants in order to prevent excessive noise pollution caused by night clubs, industrial sites, road traffic, air traffic and rail traffic, officials have said.

Lütfi Akça, head of the ministry's Environmental Management Directorate, wrote a letter to the Transportation Ministry requesting ministry officials prepare noise sources lists for districts with more than 250,000 inhabitants by June 30, 2011, and produce noise maps by June 30, 2013. Akça also requested that action plans, which are to be designed in accordance with the maps, be ready by July 18, 2014. The Environmental Management Directorate has prepared draft noise sources lists for Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Antalya, all of which have airports with air traffic of more than 50,000 flights per year. According to the letter, separate noise maps will be produced for 41 districts throughout Turkey. Of these maps, 28 are to be produced for districts in Istanbul, six for Ankara and seven for Izmir.

The studies will be conducted on the basis of the Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise Directive. Noise maps of residential areas within the boundaries of metropolitan municipalities will be produced by the metropolitan municipalities in cooperation with the provincial municipalities. The noise maps of the residential areas located outside the municipalities' boundaries and adjacent areas will be produced by the Transportation Ministry

EU CALL FOR STRONGER CONTROLS ON NOISE POLLUTION

At its plenary session on 15 and 16 July 2009, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) called for concrete measures to overcome the stagnation in persisting high levels of noise and pollutants emission from road transport.

The Committee opinion on “Emissions from road transport: concrete measures to overcome stagnation”, points out that emissions from private, public and goods road transport continue to cause serious illness and erode quality of life, especially for urban populations, representing more than 75% of European citizens.

“The current system of self-certification by the industry and the negotiating of controls at the UN Economic Council for Europe obviously do not deliver the needed improvements for the citizens” explained Edgardo Iozia, the Committee’s rapporteur. “While tests in laboratory conditions are used to prove compliance with EU emission standards, on-road controls, particularly during use, show that noise and pollutants emissions are considerably higher than those recorded in the cycle tests.”

The EESC recommends that the European Community Institutions take immediately steps to strengthen control measures, thereby protecting citizens’ health

NOISE RULES TO MOVE WIND TURBINES AWAY FROM HOMES

The province of Prince Edward Island (Canada) has confirmed that it will increase the distance wind turbines must be from homes, but not by as much as some were looking for. The setback distance will now be four times the height of the turbine, as measured from the ground to the top of the blade. For the biggest turbines, the V90s, that would mean increasing the setback to 500 metres. Currently it is 375 metres. Noise was the biggest concern.

NOISE-LAW CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE REJECTED ON TECHNICALITIES

Georgia’s Supreme Court has thrown out two University of Georgia students’ lawsuit seeking to overturn an Athens-Clarke County law regulating loud noise. The court ruled 4-3 that the students, William Hoffman and Robert Manlove, cannot challenge the law, because they’d never been cited for violating the noise ordinance. “In order to challenge the constitutionality of an ordinance on First Amendment grounds, the party before the court must show an injury in fact,” Justice Robert Benham wrote in the three-page majority opinion. “Here, it is undisputed that appellants have never been subject to any fine or penalty as a result of violating” the law.