

## See The Air

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## The European Union Agreed on New Rules & PM2.5/NO2 Limits for Cleaner Air

✂ [FEBRUARY 26, 2024](#)[FEBRUARY 27, 2024](#) ✂ [SOTIRIOS PAPATHANASIOU](#) ✂ [4 COMMENTS](#)

On February 20, 2024, the Council of the EU released a press release that discusses the agreement reached by the Council and Parliament to strengthen air quality standards in the EU. The new standards are expected to improve air quality and reduce premature deaths. They will be reviewed regularly and could be further strengthened in the future.

EU lawmakers have joined forces to strengthen air quality standards by 2030. These new, stricter limits and targets align more closely with World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations and will be subject to regular review. The updated directive tackles a range of air pollutants, including fine particles (PM2.5 and PM10), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), sulphur dioxide (SO2), and even toxic metals like arsenic and lead. Each pollutant has its own specific standard, with the most significant

reductions targeting those posing the greatest health risks. For example, annual limits for PM2.5 and NO2 will be more than halved, dropping from 25  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  to 10  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and 40  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  to 20  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , respectively.



**ANNEX I****AIR QUALITY STANDARDS****SECTION 1 - LIMIT VALUES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN HEALTH***Table 1 – Limit values for the protection of human health to be attained by 1 January 2030*

<b>Averaging period</b>	<b>Limit value</b>
<b>PM<sub>2.5</sub></b>	
1 day	25 µg/m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 18 times per calendar year
Calendar year	10 µg/m <sup>3</sup>
<b>PM<sub>10</sub></b>	
1 day	45 µg/m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 18 times per calendar year
Calendar year	20 µg/m <sup>3</sup>
<b>Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)</b>	
1 hour	200 µg/m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than <del>one</del> <u>3 times</u> per calendar year
1 day	50 µg/m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 18 times per calendar year
Calendar year	20 µg/m <sup>3</sup>
<b>Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>)</b>	
1 hour	350 µg/m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than <del>one</del> <u>3 times</u> per calendar year
1 day	50 µg/m <sup>3</sup> not to be exceeded more than 18 times per calendar year
Calendar year	20 µg/m <sup>3</sup>
<b>Benzene</b>	
Calendar year	3,4 µg/m <sup>3</sup>



While the deadline for achieving cleaner air remains 2030, EU countries now have a potential safety net. Under specific circumstances, they can request a delay until 2040. However, this isn't a free pass. To qualify, they must demonstrate clear reasons and meet strict conditions. This ensures everyone

strives for clean air, while offering flexibility for exceptional situations.

## Action Plans

If pollution levels rise above safe limits, countries must take action:

- Provide an **air quality roadmap** ahead of the deadline if the level of pollutants exceeds the limit or target value
- Establish **air quality plans** for areas where the levels of pollutants exceed the limit and target values set out in the directive after the deadline
- Establish **short-term action plans** setting out emergency measures (e.g. restricting the circulation of vehicles, suspending construction works, suspending agriculture burnings, halt wood burning, etc.) to reduce the immediate risk to human health in areas where the alert thresholds will be exceeded

Finally, new rules empower citizens! Under the revised directive, if pollution caused by a country's negligence harms your health, you'll be able to seek compensation. This means holding governments accountable for upholding clean air standards and protecting your well-being.

For more information visit <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/>  
(<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/02/20/air-quality-council-and-parliament-strike-deal-to-strengthen-standards-in-the-eu/>).

✎ [ANNUAL](#), [EU](#), [EUROPEAN](#), [HEALTH](#), [LIMITS](#), [NO2](#), [PM2.5](#)

## 4 thoughts on “The European Union Agreed on New Rules & PM2.5/NO2 Limits for Cleaner Air”

### 1. [Avrupa Birliği ve ABD Hava kalitesi Standartlarını Güncelledi - Airqoon - Erişilebilir ve kullanımı kolay hava ölçüm çözümleri](#) says:

[MARCH 1, 2024 AT 11:30 AM](#)

[...] See The Air. (2024). Avrupa Birliği, Temiz Hava için Yeni Kurallar ve PM2.5/NO2 Sınırları Üzerinde Anlaştı. [...]

[REPLY](#) ✎

### 2. [European Union and United States Update Air Quality Standards - Airqoon - Cost effective and easy to use air monitoring at scale](#) says:

[MARCH 1, 2024 AT 11:35 AM](#)

[...] See The Air. (2024). The European Union Agreed on New Rules & PM2.5/NO2 Limits for Cleaner Air. [...]

[REPLY](#) ✎

### 3. [Air Quality Report from 5 Major European Cities – See The Air](#) says:

[MARCH 7, 2024 AT 12:01 PM](#)

[...] around 32 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. PM2.5 concentrations are still above WHO AQ Guidelines and the new European limits. We can see some anomalies that I think are related to fires. Madrid low emission zone has had [...]

REPLY ↗

**cleanairtas** says:

MARCH 9, 2024 AT 3:09 PM

What do you think of the new EU air standards SOTIRIOS PAPATHANASIOU

REPLY ↗

