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Information on a national proposal for regulatory provisions to cut down diesel particle emissions in Switzerland

Transmitted by the expert of Switzerland

On 28 October 2003, the Swiss Federal Council was presented with a parliamentary motion obliging it to respond to a request to draft a set of proposals for regulatory provisions designed to cut down diesel particle emissions by applying best available technology (i.e. fitting of diesel particle filters) in diesel passenger cars. The motion was submitted by the Committee for the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy. According to the timeframe envisaged by the proposal, all new diesel passenger cars imported and brought into circulation in Switzerland should be equipped with particle filters on a mandatory basis commencing in January 2006.

The arguments supporting this proposal include the carcinogenic effects of diesel particles, the resulting respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and the detrimental effects on global warming. While diesel passenger cars are relatively CO₂ efficient, the advantages are compromised by the air hygiene and climatic disadvantages of diesel soot and ultra-fine diesel particle emissions. The compulsory fitting of diesel particle filters would remove these disadvantages.

Once the Federal Council has published its position statement, the proposal is still subject to debate in the Swiss parliament. The outcome of these deliberations is expected by the summer of this year.
