

## **EC NOISE EXPERTS GROUP: Activities and purposes**

After the success of the Conference entitled Noise in Europe held in Brussels on 24 April 2017, promoted by the European Commission (EC) with the deep involvement of EAA, the EC decided to broaden the existing Noise Experts Group - initially mainly composed by the representatives from the Member States -, to allow a higher number of stakeholders to discuss the future of noise policy within EU. This was done in line with the result of the implementation report of the Environmental Noise Directive, as well as of the referred Noise Conference.

According to the Commission rules on expert groups, specific rules of procedure for this group were established and adopted, being recently updated on the basis of the EC new political guidelines, addressed by the motto "A Union that strives for more", which includes a new (green) deal and challenges within the circular economy concept. On this basis the Noise Experts Group, now composed by the member states and relevant stakeholders and associations, in which EAA is an important member, is able to as whole issue a delegation act to support decisions taken by EC on the matter of control and assessment of environmental noise.

In the first meeting of this group, up to now there were 3 meeting only, the Commission representative informed that the objective of this group was and is to assist and help the EC on future options for the European noise policy. I believe that for the EAA, the participation in this group is of fundamental importance for, by one side, it allows a better knowledge of the current trends and issues related to environmental noise and, by the other, is an opportunity to be involved in the core room where some relevant options for noise control and mitigation effects are discussed, presented and future oriented. For the EC, the EAA involvement is certainly an added value for, due to its goals, independence and principles, EAA has such a panoramic view, as no one maybe has on noise problems in Europe.

In the aim to evaluate what could be better options to be taken in the short-term periods, it was agreed in a recent meeting the terms of reference for a study to be developed by the EC, addressed to the assessment of the health benefit impact of noise related measures. The general objective of this study is to support the Commission in defining the potential of measures capable of delivering significant reduction of the health burden due to environmental noise from roads, railways and aircrafts, and assess how relevant noise related Union legislation could enhance the implementation of measures, while considering the constraints and specificities of each transport mode.

This study will include the assessment of national and EU legislation. When a reference is made to the national legislation, as a minimum it is expected that the national laws specifically aimed at noise management (e.g.: zoning, noise limits, noise targets, national noise reduction or noise insulation programs amongst others) and which are compliant with Union law, are considered. When reference is made to EU legislation, as a minimum it is expected that the legislation on road noise, rail noise and aircraft noise are considered, and as well those pieces of international legislation or agreements to which the EU adheres and which constitute therefore an acquired part of the EU acquis even if not directly developed by the EU.

I (we) hope the development of this study could lead to a more consistent and sustainable way on tackling with environmental noise issues, thus contributing for a greener ambient.

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