

EU Noise Policy
Strategic Noise Mapping around Europe

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ABSTRACT

1. INTRODUCTION

For many years the Nordic countries have cooperated on noise issues through the Nordic Noise Group (NNG) established under the Nordic Council of Ministers. The work of the NNG has encompassed development of common prediction methods, sharing of experience on mitigation measures etc.

Since 1996 noise has been on the European agenda. In 1996 the Commission launched a Green Book to start the process and in Copenhagen in 1998 a kick-off conference was held and a number of expert working groups were established to assist the Commission in developing the Directive.

In June 2002 the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted the Directive 2002/49 relating to the Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise, often referred to as the European Noise Directive (END).

In July 2007 all Member States should have carried out strategic noise mappings and by the end of December 2007 the mapping results should have been made public.

According to the END action plans shall now be drawn up by July 2008. The action plans shall be designed to manage noise reduction issues to prevent or reduce harmful environmental noise impact, where necessary and to preserve environmental sound quality, where it is still good.

If the above mentioned obligations had been fulfilled, we would have a full picture of the noise situation in Europe by now. As I shall report in this paper, there is still a way to go and the full picture might be given at the oral presentation during the conference in August.

2. END and WG-AEN


In 1998 a number of working groups were established and reorganised several times since. In 2002 a new Working Group of noise expert was established, named WG-AEN (assessment of exposure to noise) in order to assist the Commission, the Agency and the Member States in the mapping process.




This paper will report on the tasks of this group; what has been achieved and what support is available as a result of the work of this group. In the oral presentation summaries of the main position papers will be presented.

Next year the focus of the WG-AEN might change a bit to look further into the health implications of noise.

3. Position Papers

During the last years the group has produced the following position papers. Most of the papers are available at the CIRCA website:

-  Good Practice Guide on strategic noise mapping (version 2 by 13 January 2006) including the implications for acoustic accuracy in the noise mapping. This paper contains a number of unclear issues in the END and gives default values to use if data is lacking. The GPG even show typical accuracy of the default values.

-  Presenting noise mapping information to the public including how to communicate noise maps etc. dated December 2007. The paper gives ideas about how to communicate and present data to different parts of the public (young - elderly; high educated or not; etc) and to engage the public into the action planning
-  Catalogue of relevant mapping software, showing features as relevant to strategic noise mapping, output facilities, acoustical standards and prediction methods implemented. Limitations on size of area. At present no information is given on calculation speed.
-  Options for the common European prediction method (in progress). At present no common method is available. In the END some interim methods are recommended. According to Article 6 of the END common assessment methods shall be established by the Commission.

All the papers mentioned above and much other relevant noise information can be found on the Commission website <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/noise/>, where you will also be able to see the reported noise data from the Member States. The CIRCA website http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/d_2002_49/library is also recommended.

In addition WG-AEN has dealt with a number of issues:

- ? Quiet areas and how to delimit....?
- ? The reporting mechanism for the END (EEA funded study)
- ? TERM and scorecard
- ? Validation of prediction methods and software....
- ? Deliverables of Harmonoise and IMAGINE (in progress). A WG-AEN paper will examine the outcome of these research projects in order to become the common European prediction method, preferable for use in the second round of noise mapping by 2012.

The WG has also followed a number of research studies on noise issues going on in Europe and coordinated through CALM.

4. First European noise data

By the end of June 2008 only 16 out the 27 Member States of EU have reported their data to the Commission, and 11 of the 16 are incomplete. Thus the full picture of the noise situation in Europe is still on its way. Below you will see one example of reported data (from the agglomerations in the Netherlands).

Form 1.5a Agglomerations: Total number of people exposed, Lden																					
The estimated total number of people (in hundreds) living in dwellings that are exposed to each of the following bands of values of Lden in dB(A) 4 m above the ground and on the most exposed façade. (2002/49/EC Annex VI, section 1.5) The figures must be rounded down to the nearest integer.																					
Agglomeration	Calculation Method ID				Lden [dB(A)], 4 m above ground, on most exposed façade.																
	Road	Rail	Air	Industry	55-59				60-64				65-69				70-74				
	Road	Rail	Air	Industry	Road	Rail	Air	Industry	Road	Rail	Air	Industry	Road	Rail	Air	Industr	Road	Rail	Air	Industr	
Amsterdam	A	B	C	D	202.000	37.300	60.600	13.900	196.100	22.200	6.100	300	126.300	10.600	1.200	100	19.400	2.200	100	0	400
Eindhoven	A	B	C	D	63.300	10.800	400	4.000	44.800	5.100	100	0	14.000	2.100	100	0	200	2.400	0	0	0
Den Haag	A	B	C	D	203.500	19.700	0	10.500	181.600	8.200	0	600	71.100	4.200	0	100	5.400	800	0	0	100
Heerlen	A	B	C	D	35.900	2.100	0	700	30.100	400	0	0	18.000	100	0	0	700	0	0	0	0
Rotterdam	A	B	C	D	217.200	29.700	600	51.000	155.900	12.400	0	12.200	92.500	2.900	0	100	16.600	1.000	0	0	500
Utrecht	A	B	C	D	106.000	19.000	0	1.400	64.800	12.400	0	0	22.200	5.100	0	0	2.200	2.400	0	0	0
Totaal agglomeraties					827.900	118.600	61.600	81.500	673.300	60.700	6.200	13.100	344.100	25.000	1.300	300	44.500	8.800	100	0	1.000

The reporting shown above was done by using the official Reporting Mechanism developed for the European Environment Agency.

The amount of data to be reported and dealt with by the Commission is very large. At present the European Topic Centre ETC in Spain is proof checking the data received so far.

At the Conference it is hoped that an almost completed data reporting can be presented. Based on the reported data it is the obligation of the Commission to propose any relevant Community measures to reduce noise in Europe emitted by the major sources, in particular road and rail vehicles, outdoor equipment and mobile machinery.

In addition any news from the EU Noise Policy work and the process of harmonised prediction methods will be discussed in the oral presentation.

5. REFERENCES

- [1] OJEC L189/12 Directive 2002/49 of 25 June 2002
- [2] Good Practice Guide for Strategic Noise Mapping and the Production of Associated Data on Noise Exposure, Version 2 of 13th January 2006, WG-AEN.
- [3] Presenting Noise Mapping Information to the Public. December 2007 WG-AEN