

Agenda of the European Commission ***16 – 20 December 2013***

**Background notes from the Spokespersons' service for journalists.
The European Commission reserves the right to make changes.**

Wednesday 18 December:

The Commission presents air quality package

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The news:

On 18 December, the European Commission will set out a review of the air quality legislation and a strategy for improvements until the year 2030. This new air quality strategy will include:

- a revised National Emission Ceilings Directive to implement reductions up to 2030;
- ratification of the Gothenburg Protocol; and
- legislative proposal to reduce air emissions from medium scale combustion installations.

The background:

Air pollution is the number one **environmental** cause of death in the EU. Each year, 400,000 people in Europe die prematurely due to diseases linked to air pollution. At the same time, poor air quality causes huge economic and environmental costs. Successful EU and international policies have reduced some air pollution problems in recent decades. Despite that, the EU is far short of its long-term objective, which is to achieve levels of air quality that do not have significant negative impacts on human health and the environment. In this context, the Commission aims at updating and improving EU policy on air quality by developing an air quality package which targets to get all the polluted zones in compliance by 2020 and to set Europe on the pathway towards achieving the WHO guidelines beyond 2030. Air pollution is transboundary – it does not stop at the country borders. Therefore national action needs to be complemented by effective cooperation both at EU and international level too.

The event:

- 11:00 (timing to be confirmed) Press conference with Janez Potočnik, the European Commissioner for Environment, in the Berlaymont press room: Commissioner will present the main elements of the air quality review. More specific details will be provided during a technical briefing on the record (11:30 - timing to be confirmed).
- A joint press release and a MEMO Q&A will be available on the day.
- Available on EbS

The sources:

- Review of the EU Air policy: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/review_air_policy.htm
- http://wcmcom-ec-europa-eu-wip.wcm3vue.cec.eu.int:8080/health/healthy_environments/policy/index_en.htm
- [I-078828](#) Every breath you take (documentary)

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