

## - General provisions -

The development of surface transport infrastructure, encompassing both roads and railways, leads to noise that is increasingly resented by those living nearby.

French policy for limiting these effects is along three main lines:

- the classification of noisy roads/railways and the identification of areas where the soundproofing of premises should be enhanced
- the incorporation, at an early stage, of noise considerations in the construction or modification of a road/railway

• corrective actions with respect to critical situations or «black spots»

### 1. Classification of noisy roads and railways

#### • Principle

In each “département”, the Prefect is responsible for listing and classifying surface transport facilities according to their noise characteristics and the traffic they carry (in application of Article 13 of the French Law relative to noise abatement, now codified at article L. 571-10 of the French Environmental code). On the basis of this inventory, he determines, after consultation with the communes, the areas affected by noise in the vicinity of this infrastructure, the relevant noise levels to be taken into account and the technical requirements to be applied during construction of buildings in order to attenuate exposure to noise.

#### • Implementation

The Prefect issues a classification order covering the areas affected by noise, the noise levels to be taken into account by builders and the sound insulation of building façade elements to be reached.

Under the French Urbanism code, it is compulsory for this classification to be incorporated in the graphic documents of the land-use planning schemes.

According to French Construction and Housing code, as a consequence of the classification of noisy transport infrastructures, new constructions built alongside classified roads or railways are to meet minimum acoustical insulation requirements. In particular, urbanism certificates are required to indicate whether land lies within an area affected by noise.

### 2. Noise from new or modified infrastructure

The incorporation of noise considerations in the development and construction of surface transport infrastructure (roads and railways) was reinforced by article 12 of the French Law of 31 December 1992 relative to noise abatement, now codified at article 571-9 of the French Environmental code, and by Decree n° 95-22 of 9 January 1995.

During the construction of new surface transport infrastructure, or the significant modification of an existing road/railway (with noise emissions on completion of works increasing by more than 2 dB(A)), the project management must take appropriate measures to ensure that noise emissions do not exceed the limits set by order (erecting noise screens or even soundproofing buildings)

### 3. Preventive and corrective actions with respect to critical situations or «black spots»

The expansion of road and rail traffic, and poorly controlled urbanization in the vicinity of transport infrastructure, have produced critical situations. The number of such dwellings affected by noise from road and rail infrastructure is considered too high. In view of this situation, the government has stimulated a policy based upon prevention, abatement at source and corrective actions of most critical situations (black spots), also providing national road and rail networks with appreciably more resources.

#### • Preventive measures: noise reduction at source

The preventive measures foreseen cover not only the use of less noisy equipment and pavements, but also the enhanced noise protection of dwellings in the vicinity of terrestrial transport infrastructure, and the introduction of new building rules.

In addition, a number of measures have been decreed with the aim not only of reducing road noise (less noisy pavements and improvements in vehicle performance) but also rail noise (more advanced rolling stock).

#### • Census of black spots and corrective actions to deal with black spots

The statistics on noise black spots due to terrestrial transport need updating. The Prefects are given the task of identifying areas of critical noise intensity on all transport systems, in conjunction with local authorities, RFF and SNCF, and of preparing an inventory of national network black spots where action should be taken.

On the basis of this inventory, a programme has been launched to protect 50,000 dwellings over a 5-year period. This programme will focus on reducing noise at source (by reducing traffic density or traffic speed) supplemented as necessary by building insulation.

Priority actions concern *Super black spots*<sup>1</sup> as well as *Sensitive Urban Areas*.

Under Decree n°2002-867 of 3 May 2002 (modified by decree n°2003-1392 of 23 December 2003), noise insulation funding allocated by the French Ministry in charge of Environment may be granted by Département Prefects.

#### • Implementation and evolution perspectives

In order to define the practical implementation of this scheme, ministries in charge of Transportation and Environment have produced a circular letter that provides Prefects with guidelines for setting up traffic noise observatories as well as addressing the issue of noise black spots (circular letter of 12 June 2001).

This scheme should be reinforced by the current implementation of the European Directive on the assessment and management of environmental noise (2002/49/EC

<sup>1</sup> *Super black spots*: group of buildings where noise levels in front of buildings are both greater than 70 dB during the day and 65 dB(A) at night

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Directive of 25 June 2002), a Directive that has been transposed into French law<sup>2</sup>.

In preparation of this new framework, and within the wake of the 6 October 2003 National Noise Action Plan, the 2001 scheme was adapted thanks to a circular letter on noise from terrestrial transport infrastructures (25 May 2004): this document, co-signed by the Ministry in charge of urban areas, outlines the new priorities set forth by the National Noise Action Plan<sup>3</sup> and underlines its similarities with the European Directive (e.g., introducing Lden and Lnight limit values).

Further information and downloadable regulatory documents are available at the Ministry's website:

[www.ecologie.gouv.fr](http://www.ecologie.gouv.fr)

(section « mission risques et pollutions » or red leaf logo, then « bruit »...)

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*DPPR / Mission Bruit*

*Contact: J. Larivé*

*Tel. 01 42 19 15 41 – Fax. ~15 93*

*E-mail: [mission-bruit@ecologie.gouv.fr](mailto:mission-bruit@ecologie.gouv.fr)*

*Ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement et de l'Aménagement Durables*

*20, Av. de Ségur – 75302 Paris SP 07 – France*

*Website: <http://www.ecologie.gouv.fr>*

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<sup>2</sup> *Transposition inserted by Order in 2004 and supplemented in early 2006 by various transposition texts, following ratification of this Order; to this day, texts relating to the transposition of the Directive include:*

- Articles L572-1 to L572-11 of the Environmental Code;
- Decree n°2006-361 of 24 March 2006 and Arrêté of 4 April 2006 on the establishment of noise maps and ambient noise prevention plans;
- Arrêté of 3 April 2006 establishing the list of airports mentioned at section I of Article R147-5-1 of the Urbanism Code.

<sup>3</sup> *New priorities set forth in the October 2003 National Noise Action Plan = black spots located in Sensitive Urban Areas or exposed to noise levels that are both greater than 70 dB during the day and 65 dB(A) at night*