

## **EU LEGISLATION UPDATE**

**MARCH 2006**



### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIALOGUE**

#### **Driving licence Directive compromise text agreed by Member States**

On 27 March, the Member States Transport Ministers agreed the compromise text proposed by the Luxembourg Presidency in 2005 and which was informally agreed by the European Parliament last summer. The text proposes that:

- a single new driving licence model in credit card format with reinforced security features will be introduced
- the 110 different models still in circulation will be gradually phased out
- after the entry into force of the directive, Member States will have 26 years at their disposal to replace the existing driving licences.
- Member States will be able to introduce a microchip on the new model – EU data protection rules will have to be respected in all cases
- the validity of driving licenses will be limited – the text proposes a 10 year validity period which Member States may raise to 15 years. Member States are free to organise medical examinations at the time of administrative renewal.
- Concerning trailers, as previously reported, the text will allow a B (car) licence holder to drive vehicle with a maximum authorised mass not exceeding 3500 kilograms and designed and constructed for no more than 8 passengers in addition to the driver and combined with a trailer having a maximum authorized mass which does not exceed 750 kilograms. If it exceeds 750 kilograms and the total combined weight does not exceed 4250 kilograms, the B licence holder will have to undergo training and Member States may require a test be taken. This is the compromise text which was agreed following the Commission's original proposal which was much stricter.
- Concerning motorcycles, the text is still not satisfactory for the motorcycle community, specifically as it requires training or testing between the A2 and A motorcycles. The Motorcycle Community is currently reviewing its options.

The European Parliament will now have to approve – or not – this agreement in the coming months. However, it is understood that the intention is to support the text in order to avoid further protracted discussions on the text. If that happens, the Directive will enter into force by the end of 2006 and therefore be applicable at the latest at the end of 2012.

## **INFORMATION**

### **The European Parliament has said that the EU must end use of oil for transport**

The EP Environment Committee has adopted a Report that says that the EU must aim to have stopped using oil for transport within a generation – saying “The EU's energy strategy should concentrate initially on the total substitution of fossil fuel use in the transport sector by 2030”. The comment was made in a non-legislative resolution on the European Commission's energy efficiency green paper and is one measure the EP Committee is proposing to help ensure the EU becomes the world's most energy efficient economic bloc by 2020. The EP Energy Committee will now consider the Environment Committee's Report.

### **Continued desire for stricter emission limits**

During a meeting of the Environment Ministers in March, the majority of Ministers made clear that they want the recent Euro 5 proposals on car emissions to be strengthened with an extra stage of long-term emission cuts and Transport Ministers debated plans for a review of the European sustainable development strategy where the Netherlands and Germany called for swift implementation of stricter vehicle emission standards to help member states comply with EU air quality rules.

Additionally, the Member States seem to be increasingly of the view that post-euro 5 nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) emission targets for diesel cars should be set now. The euro 5 proposals, published in December, envisage a 200 mg/km limit on diesel car NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, effective from 2008. Further limits, applicable from 2013, would be set only after a review in 2009. Germany believes the euro 5 limit for diesel cars should be further reduced to 180 mg/km, and that the EU should now agree on an ambitious 80 mg/km 2013 standard. On the other hand, Germany is calling for NO<sub>x</sub> limits for petrol cars to be left at their current level of 80 mg/km, rather than being reduced to 60 mg/km as proposed by the European commission for euro 5.

In parallel, the Dutch Environmental assessment agency has made a recalculation of fine particle air pollution in the Netherlands and found it to be 10-15% less than previously thought. It therefore believes that the Netherlands will meet the PM10 targets by 2015 if additional policies are adopted - include implementing the EU national emission ceilings directive, fully executing a Dutch air quality plan proposed last year, and implementing the EU thematic strategy on air quality.

### **Member States support Air Quality Plan**

Environment Ministers have also given cautious support to the EU's CAFE air quality plan saying that the emission targets proposed by the European commission for 2020 are "an appropriate basis for further considerations". Ministers called on the commission to come forward with further measures to reduce emissions, including the introduction of "Euro 6" norms for heavy goods vehicles. However, Ministers also said that Member States need more flexibility to meet current EU air quality standards because there are difficulties in complying with EU law and this should be taken into account by the Commission when revising the national ceilings directive.

### **Car and oil firms support clean fuels**

Renault, DaimlerChrysler, Volkswagen, Shell and SasolChevron have called on the European Commission to propose EU legislation to promote non-oil transport fuels that they say could slash air pollution and eventually help cut greenhouse gas emissions. The Alliance for synthetic fuels in Europe (Afse) wants EU-level targets and tax incentives to increase the penetration of petrol and diesel made from natural gas and biomass rather than oil. They believe that gas-to-liquid (GTL) and biomass-to-liquid (BTL) use could cut engine emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) by up to 45%, particulate emissions by up to 40% and could halve emissions of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide. Both fuels are sulphur free. However, using GTL fuels in current car engines would not cut carbon dioxide emissions while using them in dedicated engines running pure synthetic fuels of either type would cut carbon emissions and BTL fuels offer double the carbon dioxide savings anticipated by the first-generation biofuels such as biodiesel.

### **Traffic pollution "breaching EU health norms**

The European Environment Agency has reported that vehicle pollution is likely to exceed limits in many European city streets where background levels are in compliance. The study has modelled air quality in narrow, medium and wide street in 20 European cities and it forecasts that fine particle (PM10) limits will still be breached in most narrow streets even allowing for further efforts to cut emissions and Nitrogen dioxide (NO2) norms could also be widely breached in 2030.

### **Austrian air quality legislation finalised**

Austria's parliament has approved new rules on particle pollution - with monitoring being expanded and extended from PM10, the current EU regulatory standard, to the even smaller PM2.5 fraction. Austria's provinces will also have more freedom to clamp down on emissions where particle pollution exceeds limits.

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The FIVA Legislation Commission members are: Horst Bruning (Chairman); Tidde Bresters, Andrew Burt, David Davis, Adalberto Gueli, Winfried Kallinger; Patrick Rollet, Svend Aage Tholstrup; and Carla Fiocchi (Secretariat)