

EU LEGISLATION UPDATE

MAY 2007



OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIALOGUE

Blind spot mirrors concerns resolved by European Parliament

On 10 May, the European Parliament adopted an amendment to the Commission's proposal on the retrofitting of blind-spot mirrors. This amendment was necessary as, while the European Commission intended for the Directive to exempt historic vehicles in order to avoid authenticity and practical fitting issues, the original drafting left a loophole that meant that it would probably not cover historic vehicles with recent registrations. This new text satisfies FIVA's concerns and reads:

Vehicles in categories N2 and N3, which were originally registered and/or have been type-approved and/or put into service before the date mentioned in Article 2(2)(a), and which are operated mainly for their historical interest should not be affected by the rules and procedures laid down in this Directive.

INFORMATION

EU agrees emission limits for new cars

Further to discussion at the end of last year, the EU institutions have agreed new vehicle emission limits. From 2009 NO_x emissions from petrol cars must not exceed 60 milligrams per kilometre (mg/km), down from 80 mg/km under current Euro 4 standards and by 2009 diesel cars must limit NO_x emissions to 180 mg/km - compared with the current 250 mg/km Euro 4 standard. In 2014, the standard falls again to 80 mg/km. Similar cuts are also envisaged for diesel vans. Under Euro 5, particulate matter emissions (PM) from diesel cars will have to be reduced from 25 to 5 mg/km - the same as for petrol cars - and the new limit will require particle filters to be fitted to all new diesel cars from 2009. Additionally, sport utility vehicles (SUVs) over 2 tonnes will be subject to emissions standards for cars from 2012 rather than weaker separate standards that apply to "vehicles fulfilling special social needs"; and manufacturers of all vehicles will have to provide independent repair operators with "unrestricted and standardised" access to maintenance and repair information at a "reasonable and proportionate" charge.

In parallel to this agreement, the car industry is saying that it cannot meet the 2012 proposed deadline for the intended reduction of CO₂ emissions for new cars. It says that it can only meet the 130 grams per kilometre by 2015 at the earliest. The industry has also claimed that the proposed CO₂ emission limit actually risks having the opposite effect as it will add €2,500 on average to the cost of a new car, thereby reducing the number of new cars sold therefore keep overall CO₂ emissions higher.

MEPs concerns over End-of-life Vehicles Directive implementation

The European Parliament has said that there wide differences in the implementation of the End-of-Life Vehicle Directive across the EU and has called on the Commission to address the matter. The Directive was designed to introduce recycling and recovery targets for old cars, and made vehicle producers responsible for meeting the costs of free end-of-life take-back by car-owners. Sweden and the Netherlands seem to have implemented the Directive effectively, but others have not, with a key issue being disagreements over who should pay increased treatment costs. Other issues are the complex administrative requirements which have created certain loopholes which have led to ELV cars being illegally exported outside the EU, unlicensed treatment and vehicles being abandoned. The Commission has recognised some failings has also said that a review due to end in 2009 could lead to significant changes designed to address the concerns.

European greenhouse gas emissions reduced in 2005

The European Environment Agency has announced that EU greenhouse gas emissions fell in 2005 – reversing the trend of the previous two years. While most of the reduction is a result of decreases in emissions of gases other than CO₂, decreases in road transport emissions are a part of the positive trend which in previous years had been the main reason of the increases.

German ministry plans car labelling revamp

The German Environment Ministry has unveiled proposals to revise a national car labelling scheme for carbon dioxide emissions and fuel efficiency. Under current EU law manufacturers must indicate the amount of CO₂ emissions produced per kilometre (g/km) by new cars. However, the German Ministry has said that that information alone tells German consumers little about a new car's pollution levels. It is therefore proposing to add reference to the new EU target of 130 g/km for average new car emissions – and the label would indicate how far the car's emissions deviate from this target and how much tax the car owner would expect to pay under an emissions-weighted vehicle taxation scheme.

Sweden develops new car emissions index

Sweden has developed an index of average carbon dioxide emissions produced by new cars designed to highlight the different climate impact of road transport in different cities. The data has revealed that new cars sold in Sweden emit an average 189 grams of CO₂ per kilometre - 20 per cent higher than the EU average and the highest of any EU country. Average emissions vary from 172 g/km in the southern municipality of Ndeshog to 211 g/km in Danderyd near Stockholm. The index also notes that only six per cent of cars sold emit less than the current EU target of 140g/km.

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The FIVA Legislation Commission members are: Horst Brüning (Chairman), Tiddo Bresters (the Netherlands), Andrew Burt , (UK), David Davies (UK), Marek Gacek (Poland), Zoltán Gárdos (Hungary), Dage Groop (Finland), Adalberto Gueli (Italy), Peeter Henning (Belgium), Maik Hirschfeld (Germany), David Hurley (UK), Winfried Kallinger (Austria), Jim Krier (Luxembourg), Victor Papadopoulos (Cyprus), Patrick Rollet (France), Zdenek Ruzicka (Czech Republic) and Carla Fiocchi (Secretariat). Andrew Turner of EPPA works with the Committee.