

EU LEGISLATION UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2006



OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIALOGUE

European Parliament resolution on the thematic strategy on air pollution

In May, FIVA reported that the European Parliament Environment Committee was preparing its report on the European Commission's proposed thematic strategy on air pollution which is looking at future measures and norms to be adopted to further improve air quality in Europe. The Commission's intention is to reduce the number of premature deaths caused by ailments linked to air pollution by around 40% by 2020 - compared to 2000. In its own-initiative report on the Commission's proposed strategy, the Environment Committee rapporteur called for more ambitious targets for reducing concentration levels of nitrogen oxides (Nox), volatile organic compounds and fine particles (PM2.5) and called for more focus on the sources of pollution, including road transport agriculture and shipping. Among a number of recommendations about new vehicle emission standards, the rapporteur's report also urged:

“...Member States to take the necessary measures to phase out older polluting vehicles or – where appropriate – provide incentives for retrofitting”.

FIVA accordingly raised its concerns with this wording with other members of the Environment Committee and when the Report went before Plenary (vote by the whole parliament), John Bowis, a UK Christian Democrat MEP, tabled an amendment which made the above paragraph read:

“invites Member States to take the necessary measures to phase out older polluting vehicles, **exempting historic vintage vehicles**, or – where appropriate – provide incentives for retrofitting”.

This amendment was supported by a majority in the Parliament and is accordingly part of the adopted text. This is another positive example of the growing recognition of the historic vehicle movement and need to ensure that it is not impacted unnecessarily or unintentionally by legislation.

Passenger car tax

The July 2005 and February 2006 EU issues updates reported on the European Commission's proposal on passenger car taxation and the FIVA lobby with the European Parliament rapporteur to propose an amendment to the proposal to the effect that:

“A tax differentiation based of the number of grams of carbon dioxide emitted per kilometre shall not be applied to historic vehicles, meaning those over 25 years old; maintained in a proper and environmentally sound manner and in a historically correct condition; either in use for leisure purposes or preserved in a collection;”

That request did not find immediate favour with the Liberal Rapporteur. However, in preparation for the Parliament vote in Plenary in early September after consultation with German Federation Werner Langen, a Christian Democrat German MEP, proposed that the following text be included in the European Parliament Report:

“in the interest of preserving classic and old vintage vehicles, nothing in this Directive shall inhibit the right of Member States to exempt vehicles of at least 20 years of age from circulation taxes.”

The text was proposed and adopted by the Parliament as a whole while the vehicle definition of is not FIVA’s definition, it is yet another positive recognition by the European Parliament of the need to support the historic vehicle movement.

INFORMATION

Environmental Policy development

The two reports above are an indication of the problems that the development of environmental policy can present the historic vehicle movement if FIVA does not communicate with decision makers. These two debates are only two of a wide number of environmental proposals currently being considered by the European institutions and over the past month the European Parliament has drafted reports on Commission proposals which, while in some instances urge stricter measures, in others urge a degree of realism to ensure that adopted measures are achievable. Since the summer break, the Parliament, in reports on Commission proposals, has called for an annual limit value for PM10 to be reduced from 40 ug/m³ to 33 ug/m³, and for the EU to aim for maximum 20 ug/m³ PM2.5 rather than 25 ug/m³ proposed by the Commission. However, it has also called for member states to be allowed to postpone compliance with existing limit values on air pollutants for up to four years beyond 2010 and has proposed that the PM10 daily limit value of 50 ug/m³ be allowed to be exceeded 55 days per year – as opposed to the 35 proposed by the Commission. It also called for the PM2.5 limits proposed to enter force in 2010 to be made non-binding until 2015 and called for member states to have greater flexibility over a requirement to reduce PM2.5 pollution by 20% between 2008-12 and 2020.

The European Commission considers stricter measures for car makers

The European Commission has told the car industry that it will propose binding legislation on the industry if it fails to meet a voluntary commitment to cut carbon dioxide emissions. The action follows a report which has shown that EU and Japanese carmakers only reduced average new car CO₂ emissions by 1.2% in 2004 and if they are to meet the target of 140 g/km by 2008, the European industry will have to improve by 3.3% per year, while Japanese firms will have to improve by 3.5% per year to comply with their 2009 target. As a result, the Commission has suggested that if the industry does not improve, it will have to replace the current voluntary arrangement with binding regulations

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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). Andrew Turner of EPPA works with the Committee.