



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 24 March 2014
7979/14
(OR. en)
PRESSE 169

Council adopts the roadworthiness package

The Council today adopted updated rules on periodic **roadworthiness tests** for motor vehicles ([PE-CONS 10/14](#); statement: [7577/14 ADD 1](#)), **roadside inspections** of commercial vehicles ([PE-CONS 12/14](#); statement: [7580/14 ADD 1](#)) and vehicle **registration documents** ([PE-CONS 11/14](#); statement: [7578/14 ADD 1](#)) (roadworthiness package).

Today's **final adoption** of the three **directives** by the Council follows an agreement reached at first reading with the European Parliament. The Parliament held its vote at the plenary session of 11 March.

Why new rules?

The updated, more harmonised rules are aimed at improving road safety, cutting back emissions in road transport caused by poor maintenance of vehicles, and ensuring fair competition for commercial vehicles. The provisions on registration documents reduce red tape in the procedure for withdrawal of registration to remove technically dangerous vehicles from the road and for allowing them back on the road once they are in order. They also make it easier for member states to share vehicle-related information stored in national registers.

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Key elements of the three directives:

Periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers

As regards vehicles already covered by the directive, passenger cars and light commercial vehicles (M1 and N1) will be tested four years after their first registration date, and every two years thereafter. M1-category vehicles used as taxis or ambulances; buses and coaches (M2, M3); heavier commercial vehicles (N2, N3); and heavy trailers (O3, O4) must be checked one year after their first registration date and subsequently each year.

The scope of testing is **extended to cover fast tractors**, capable of speeds in excess of 40km/h (T5), which are used for commercial road haulage purposes. They must be tested four years after their first registration, and after that, every two years.

Member states may conduct additional roadworthiness tests if they wish.

Heavy motorcycles (L-vehicles with an engine displacement of more than 125 cm³) will be **tested from 2022. Member states may be exempted from this obligation if they show**, on the basis of relevant road safety statistics for the previous 5 years, **that the same road safety results are achieved with other measures**, such as campaigns on driving behaviour. In any case, member states will be **free to determine the items, methods and frequency of roadworthiness tests for these categories**.

Within five years the Commission will submit to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the effectiveness of the possible inclusion of light trailers (with a mass exceeding 0.75 tonnes but not exceeding 3.5 tonnes - O2) and light motorcycles in the scope of the directive.

Among the vehicles that member states may exclude from compulsory testing are **historic cars, diplomatic vehicles, agricultural or forestry vehicles** used mainly for their intended purpose within their own area in that member state, and vehicles used exclusively on **small islands**.

Minimum technical requirements are laid down for testing centres and equipment. New inspectors who carry out tests must have reached a certain skill level.

The testing will consider impact on the environment, as well as safety aspects.

Items checked in roadworthiness tests will include compatibility between parts, such as between wheels and wheel hubs.

Defects, which are assessed in accordance with common rules, are classified into 3 categories: minor, major and dangerous.

Mileage counter readings from the previous tests will be made available to inspectors, which will make it easier to spot tampering. Odometer fraud is to be considered an offence liable to a penalty.

In cases of re-registration of a vehicle from another country, **member states must recognise a roadworthiness certificate issued by another member state**, provided that it conforms to their frequency requirements. This does not apply to heavy motorbikes.

Roadside inspections of commercial vehicles

Between periodic inspections, additional on-the-spot roadside checks will be carried out for commercial vehicles, such as buses, trucks and their trailers of at least 3.5 tonnes, and commercial road-haulage tractors with a maximum speed in excess of 40 km/h (M2, M3, N2, N3, O3, O4, T5).

While member states should take **light commercial vehicles** (below 3.5 tonnes - N1) into account in their overall road safety and roadside inspection strategies, these **are not covered by the directive**. Member states are free to decide whether they want to check light commercial vehicles or not. Within 6 years, the Commission will produce a report assessing, inter alia, the costs and benefits of the possible inclusion of such vans and their trailers (O2) in the scope of the directive.

Technical roadside checks will consist of an initial and, where necessary, more detailed inspection.

Inspection of cargo securing will be **optional** for member states. Where checks include cargo securing, staff involved must be appropriately trained.

Risk profiling will enable inspectors to spot undertakings presenting a higher risk of defects, so that these undertakings can be checked more closely and more often, if deemed appropriate. The directive lists criteria that member states may use for attributing risk profiles to undertakings. The **deadline for the application of the risk rating system is 60 months** after the entry into force of the directive.

Each year, at least **5% of the total number of vehicles** that are **registered in the European Union** will **undergo initial roadside inspections**. Having a figure at EU level is intended to ensure fair burden sharing between member states, which will make efforts to carry out an appropriate number of initial checks that would be proportionate to the total number of such vehicles registered in their territories.

As the rules set out in the directive are minimum requirements, member states are free to inspect other vehicles and check other aspects of road transport and safety.

Registration documents

Member states must record electronically data on all vehicles in their territory. Technical data from the register will be made available to inspectors for regular roadworthiness tests. Use of electronic databases also makes it easier for member states to swap information, for instance to check the vehicle's legal status in the member state in which it was previously registered.

In cases where vehicles have become so defective that they must be banned from the roads, the directive makes a distinction between cancellation of a registration for an end-of-life vehicle and suspension of authorisation to use a vehicle, which will be lifted once the vehicle has passed a new roadworthiness test.

If the **owner of the vehicle changes**, the validity of the roadworthiness **certificate will be recognised as a matter of principle** by member states.

Entry into force

The directives will enter into force twenty days after their publication in the EU Official Journal.
