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Noise limits for motor vehicles

The Committee of Permanent Representatives[1] today endorsed the provisional agreement reached on 5 November between the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council and the European Parliament representatives for the reduction of the sound level of motor vehicles. The agreement paves the way for the formal adoption of the new regulation, on which the European Parliament is expected to vote early next year.

The regulation is aimed at improving environmental protection and public safety and at ensuring a better quality of life and health, by reducing major sources of noise caused by motor vehicles.

It will introduce a new test method for measuring noise emissions and lower the limit values for the type-approval of motor vehicles. It will also address for the first time the issue of the minimum noise level of electric or hybrid electric vehicles.

The main features of the agreement include the setting of noise limit values for the different vehicle categories and a timeframe for implementation, labelling and consumer information, the development of acoustic alert systems and the impact of the road surface.

Noise limit values

A progressive reduction of the noise limit values for new vehicles will be carried out in three stages (as shown in the annexed table). The timeframe for the implementation depends on the date of application of the regulation (which is not known yet).

The regulation will be applicable two years after its entry into force.

[1] The Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) of the governments of the EU member states is responsible for preparing the work of the Council.

P R E S S

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Labelling and consumer information

Under the agreement, manufacturers and distributors should display information on noise levels of vehicles at points of sale and in printed and electronic promotional material such as brochures, leaflets and catalogues. A similar label to the one currently used for information on CO2 emissions, fuel-consumption and tyre-noise should in future inform consumers about the sound emissions of a vehicle.

Furthermore, public authorities will have to encourage the use of quieter vehicles through information campaigns in order to reduce road traffic noise.

Acoustic systems for electric vehicles

The industry is developing acoustic systems to compensate for the lack of audible signals in electric and hybrid electric vehicles to increase awareness of road users and, in particular, of blind and visually impaired pedestrians and cyclists.

To this end, such vehicles will be equipped in the coming years with Acoustic Vehicle Alerting Systems (AVAS).

Road surface quality

Given that vehicle noise levels are partially dependent on the quality of the road infrastructure, research work will be carried out in order to assess the impact of the road surfaces in the levels of noise.

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See also statement by the Lithuanian presidency:
http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/pressreleases/lithuanian-eu-council-presidency-completed-negotiations-on-regulation-stipulating-noise-limits-from-cars-

ANNEX

Limit values

Under the agreement, the sound level would not exceed the following limits:

Vehicle category	**Description of vehicle category**	**Limit values expressed in dB(A)** **[decibels (A)]**		
		Limit values for Type-approval of new vehicle types	Limit values for Type-approval of new vehicle types / new vehicles	Limit values for Type-approval of new vehicle types / new vehicles
		Phase 1 applicable from date of application specified in Article 16(2) [after 2 years]	Phase 2 applicable from 4/6 years after the date of application specified in Article 16(2) [after 6/8years]	Phase 3 applicable from 8/10 years after the date of application specified in Article 16(2) [after 10/12 years]
M	**Vehicles used for the carriage of passengers**			
M_1	power to mass ratio ≤ 120 kW/1000kg	72 [1)]	70 [1)]	68 [1)]
M_1	120 Kw/1000kg < power to mass ratio ≤ 160 kW/1000kg	73	71	69
M_1	160 Kw/1000kg < power to mass ratio	75	73	71
M_1	power to mass ratio > 200 Kw/1000kg number of seats ≤ 4 R point of driver seat ≤ 450 mm from the ground	75	74	72

M_2	mass ≤ 2500 kg	72	70	69
M_2	2500 kg < mass ≤ 3500 kg	74	72	71
M_2	3500 kg < mass ≤ 5000 kg; rated engine power ≤ 135 kW	75	73	72
M_2	3500 kg < mass ≤ 5000 kg; rated engine power > 135 kW	75	74	72
M_3	rated engine power ≤ 150 kW	76	74	73 [2)]
M_3	150 kW <rated engine power ≤ 250 kW	78	77	76 [2)]
M_3	rated engine power > 250 kW	80	78	77 [2)]
N	**Vehicles used for the carriage of goods**			
N_1	mass ≤ 2500 kg	72	71	69
N_1	2500 kg < mass ≤ 3500 kg	74	73	71
N_2	rated engine power ≤ 135 kW	77	75 [2)]	74 [2)]
N_2	rated engine power > 135 kW	78	76 [2)]	75 [2)]
N_3	rated engine power ≤ 150 kW	79	77	76 [2)]
N_3	150 kW < rated engine power ≤ 250 kW	81	79	77 [2)]
N_3	rated engine power > 250 kW	82	81	79 [2)]

1) M1 vehicles derived from N1 vehicles:
M1 vehicles with a R point > 850 mm from the ground and a total permissible laden mass more than 2500 kg have to fulfil the limit values of N1 (2500 kg < mass ≤ 3500 kg).

2) + 2 years for new vehicle type and + 1 year for new vehicles registration

Limit values shall be increased by 1dB (2 dB(A) for N3 and M3 categories) for vehicles that meet the relevant definition for off-road vehicles set out in point 4 of Section A of Annex II to EU Directive 2007/46/EC.

For M1 vehicles the increased limit values for off-road vehicles are only valid if the technically permissible maximum laden mass > 2 tonnes.
Limit values shall be increased by 2 db(A) for wheelchair accessible vehicles and armoured vehicles, as defined in Annex II of Directive 2007/46/EC.