

Far-reaching simplification of European car legislation and EU-wide approval for trucks and busses

Manufacturers of trucks, vans, buses, and trailers will no longer need to get approval for the same vehicle in 27 different countries, before placing it on the market. This is one important feature of the fundamental recast of the key legal instrument for the single market in motor vehicles, the Framework Directive on Car Type-Approval. Today, the European Parliament, following a report by MEP Malcolm Harbour, voted in favour of the European Commission's proposal to extend the scope of the directive to trucks, vans, buses, and trailers. Up to now the Community type-approval was restricted to passenger cars, motorbikes, mopeds and agricultural tractors. The new procedures will reduce the administrative burden on EU manufacturers and improve their competitiveness. It will also improve vehicle safety and open a new possibility, which is of particular interest to for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME's), to access the internal market by creating a European small series type-approval system. The new Framework Directive will now be examined by Member States.

Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen, Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry Policy, said: "Today's EP decision replaces national procedures with a single Community approval, marking another important step to simplify our legislation. At the same time it will improve the safety of trucks, buses and trailers. With less bureaucracy and more safety the European automotive industry will gain a competitive edge."

Simplification of EC legislation

The Directive will introduce the mandatory application in the EU of international regulations of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, which will replace 38 EC directives. This will enable the institutions to undertake a significant and much needed simplification of the [automotive legislation](#). Currently, EU car manufactures have to undergo two overlapping procedures (UN and EU rules) to get approval to bring products like fuel tanks, direction indicators or headlamps on the market.

The new Framework Directive will introduce EC Regulations instead of EC Directives, leading to the following advantages:

- regulations are directly applicable and do not require transposition;
- save resources for Member States, for the same reasons;
- using regulations limits the possibility for "gold-plating" by Member States, i.e. introduce market barriers through the "backdoor".

Increased safety and protection of the environment

The proposal will also make commercial vehicles much safer than today. Many safety devices of trucks, tractors, vans, trailers, semi-trailers, buses and coaches will become obligatory. They include active and passive safety features such as ABS, side-protection and anti-spray devices. Furthermore, vehicles will be more visible at night due to improvements in lighting and signalling equipments.

The directive considerably tightens the conditions for using national schemes for individual approvals to make sure that the stringent safety requirements of EC vehicle type-approval are fully effective. It will also prohibit the sale and fitting of parts or equipment which can impair the functioning of essential devices, intended to better protect passengers inside the vehicle, to reduce injuries to pedestrians hit by vehicles or to effectively treat tailpipe pollutant emissions released into the atmosphere. The list of parts or equipment concerned will be restricted to essential safety and environmental aspects. There will be broad consultation of the stakeholders on any decisions by the Commission in this respect.

Conversion of vehicles for accessibility to wheel-chair users

The new Framework Directive will open a new possibility for companies who convert vehicles for wheelchair users to access the internal market by creating a simplified, adapted European type-approval system. A set of technical requirements has been laid down which will allow wheelchair users to be safely restrained in the vehicle while seated on their wheelchair.

Therefore, the directive will considerably tighten the conditions for using such approval schemes. [More information](#) can be sought on the Automotive Industry Unit web-site.