

Motor vehicles: Approval and market surveillance

In 2016, following work in previous years but also in response to the VW case, the European Commission made a proposal to strengthen type-approval and market surveillance for motor vehicles. The European Parliament plenary is expected to vote at first reading on the proposal in April.

Background

The automotive industry is a major player in the European economy, accounting for 6.4 % of gross domestic product and 2.3 million jobs in the European Union (EU) in 2013. Road vehicles are approved under the 2007 framework directive on type-approval of motor vehicles. In order to be approved, a vehicle type must be tested for about 70 requirements, regarding safety or emissions for instance. Approval of new vehicle types is granted by national type-approval authorities and is valid across the EU, based on the principle of mutual recognition underpinning the single market. On the basis of the type-approval process, every vehicle produced is accompanied by a certificate of conformity indicating that the vehicle corresponds to an approved type. In September 2015, the [Volkswagen \(VW\) case](#) highlighted weaknesses in the implementation of type-approval rules for motor vehicles in the European Union, in particular as regards standards on emissions. The European Parliament set up a Committee of Inquiry on Emission Measurements ([EMIS](#)), which adopted its [inquiry report](#) and [draft recommendations](#) to the Council and the Commission on 28 February 2017.

European Commission proposal

In January 2016, the Commission put forward a proposal for a regulation on the approval and market surveillance of motor vehicles. Although the proposal retains most elements from the current framework directive, it introduces substantial changes. It aims to ensure effective enforcement and market surveillance (for instance by limiting the validity of type-approval certificates to five years without the possibility of prolongation, and by requiring market surveillance authorities to carry out spot-checks on cars in circulation); to strengthen the quality of testing (for instance by reinforcing provisions related to approval authorities and to technical services that would no longer receive direct payments from manufacturers); and to introduce EU oversight in the type-approval process (for instance by setting up a forum to exchange information on enforcement, and by granting the Commission powers to suspend technical services, reverse national approval authorities' measures, carry out spot-checks on vehicles, and impose administrative fines on manufacturers of up to €30 000 per non-compliant vehicle or system).

European Parliament position

In its [report](#) adopted on 9 February 2017, the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) introduced a number of changes to the proposal, in particular: tightening provisions related to market surveillance; increasing the powers of the future forum; allowing Member States to finance type-approval and market-surveillance activities through fee-based structures not levied directly by technical services and/or through national budgets; extending the validity of type-approval certificates and allowing renewal before expiry; and requiring Member States and the European Commission to make more information publicly available, for instance the results of national periodic reviews of type-approval and surveillance activities. The proposal is expected to be submitted to the European Parliament's plenary for a vote in the April I part-session. The Council is expected to adopt its general approach in the coming months, thus enabling trilogue negotiations to start.

First reading: [2016/0014\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: IMCO; Rapporteur: Daniel Dalton (ECR, UK). See the EPRS 'EU Legislation in Progress briefing', [Motor vehicles](#).

