



Cutting car emissions: Euro 5 standards

Parliament adopted a legislative report in favour of revising the current emission limits for motor vehicles (the Euro 4 standards, which have applied since 1 January 2005), including ozone precursors such as nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons as well as particles emitted by diesel engines. The new standards (known as Euro 5) will apply from 1 September 2009. The new legislation also requires information on vehicle repairs to be easily available to independent repairers.

MEPs adopted the report by 540 votes in favour to 87 against which amends the draft regulation put forward by the Commission under the Clean air for Europe programme (CAFE). They called for the new Euro 5 standard to apply from 1 September 2009 for private cars (M1). Vehicles with a maximum laden weight of more than 2,500 kg and designed to meet specific social needs - to take wheelchairs or to seat seven or more people - and light commercial vehicles (N1) will have until 1 September 2010 to comply. - The transition period for "vehicles designed for specific social needs" (ambulances, transport for disabled persons etc.) is until 2012.

Following transition periods extending up to 1 January 2011 (M1) and 1 January 2012 (N1) respectively, national authorities must refuse to grant EC or national type approval to new vehicles which do not comply with the rules on emissions or fuel consumption. MEPs regarded the 18-month implementation deadline suggested by the Commission - which wanted to introduce Euro 5 standards in mid-2008 - as too early.

Euro 6 standards on the way?

In addition, MEPs are already urging that starting dates be set for the next stage, i.e. Euro 6 standards, something not envisaged in the Commission text. They suggest 1 September 2014 for private cars (M1) and 1 September 2015 for light commercial vehicles (N1). Transition periods would run up to 1 September 2015 and 1 September 2016 respectively; after which date national authorities would refuse to grant type approval and would ban the sale of such vehicles.

Access to vehicle repair information

A contentious point of the regulation is access to information on car repairs. MEPs agreed a compromise stating that manufacturers must give independent operators access to information equivalent to that available to their authorised dealers and repair shops by means of databases. And to promote competition, MEPs say manufacturers should make training manuals available to independent repairers.

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