

**INFORMATION****INTERIOR MARKET**

Harmonization of the technical characteristics of motor vehicles

84/75

Initially the European Commission's aim in the harmonization of the technical characteristics of motor vehicles was simply to ensure that the "finished product" could circulate freely throughout the common market without being held up at frontiers. Obviously this does not concern cars in private ownership, which are already free to move from one country to another, but new vehicles to be put on the market throughout the Community : in France even if they are manufactured in Germany, in Italy even if they are manufactured in France, in the United Kingdom even if they are manufactured in Italy and so on. Before the Treaty of Rome and the introduction of harmonization measures, such "free movement" was far from complete : there were quotas, customs duties (sometimes very heavy), and a variety of manufacturing standards. The quotas and customs duties have automatically disappeared pursuant to the general provisions of the EEC, but the technical requirements had to be harmonized. Even when these differences appear at first sight to relate to only minor characteristics, they nevertheless constitute awkward impediments : every manufacturer has to adapt his production line to the requirements in force in the country to which he wishes to export his vehicles, such as maximum power of headlights, level of rear view mirrors, installation of petrol tanks, siting and dimensions of number plates, and so on. Further, the fact that requirements may be more or less stringent from one country to another caused distortions to competition. The result was higher costs for manufacturers wishing to sell their vehicles throughout the common market, such that they restricted competition and in fact worked against the interests of purchasers.

These reasons alone would justify harmonization, but they have become of secondary, even minimal, importance compared with the new objectives. Harmonization has come to assume a much broader scope and meaning. Today, the purpose and point of the "European standards" is to improve road safety, to contribute to the conservation

of the natural environment, and to protect the citizens of Europe against noise and disturbance. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the European Commission's activity in the automobile sector represents today a major European initiative in the broad field of improving the quality of life. This is not an inordinate claim:

- (i) Road accidents cost more human lives and waste more material resources than any other disaster affecting our modern industrial society. If we could eliminate accidents and their consequences, we would cancel out in Europe the results of the increase in the cost of oil. Of course, not all accidents are due to defects of vehicle quality and reliability - drivers' mistakes, road conditions and other factors play an even more important part. But standards for braking systems, resistance to impact, headlights and so on are fundamental in themselves and can limit the consequences of bad driving or poor road conditions. In any case, the Commission is operating on a broad front, for it is also concerned with standards for the issue of driving licences and the compulsory periodic servicing of vehicles.
- (ii) Air pollution, in cities at least, is to a large extent the result of motor vehicle exhaust and the lead content of petrol.
- (iii) Among the nuisances which cause disturbance and infringe the privacy to which every individual has the right, the noise and other annoyances caused by motor vehicles are by no means inconsiderable. These considerations explain and justify progress towards defining advanced and stringent European standards as regards brakes, resistance to shock, lights, exhaust gases, the lead content of petrol, maximum noise levels, the use of safety glass and so on. The standards should be Europe-wide in application for two main reasons : all Community citizens have the right to the same degree of protection, and manufacturers should be on an equal competitive footing.

The intentions of the European institutions have sometimes been misunderstood, particularly in the United Kingdom, where traditions and independence are deeply cherished. The Commission has been accused of having a "mania for harmonization", for standardizing everything manufactured in Europe. There may have been some over-zealous enthusiasm in certain departments in one or other sector, but now the general political guidelines have been laid down and there can be no further misinterpretation. In the vehicle sector in particular, nobody in Brussels has ever dreamt of designing and imposing the use of some sort of Euro-car !

In its reply last November to a parliamentary question (question No. 142/74 by Mr. Blumenfeld), the Commission defined its view in this respect. After pointing out that the enlargement of the Community necessitated a serious reappraisal of the situation as regards the removal of technical barriers to trade, the Commission said : "The outcome of these reflections has been that the Commission will in future follow in this area in particular a less uniformist approach. The Commission will in its work towards the realization of a common internal market ensure that wherever possible autonomy is left in the hands of national authorities. National legislation will not be harmonized for the sake of uniformity but only when essential for the creation of the internal market and only to the extent necessary to fulfil that goal... The Commission is of the opinion that the citizens of Europe do not wish to sacrifice their local customs and traditions for the mere sake of uniformity in the common market."

The reply obviously refers to harmonization in connection with the free movement of goods and the removal of technical barriers. For the rest, account must be taken of the aims of improving safety and protecting the natural environment reaffirmed several times by the Community.

Having thus clarified the aims and guidelines of the European Commission, the basic question remains : what has been achieved ? The answer in a nutshell is that progress is being made, but there are gaps and some serious delays.

The "general programme" for removing technical barriers to trade in the EEC adopted by the Council of the European Communities on 28 May 1969 on the proposal of the Commission provides for several stages and deadlines, most of which have been met. Several backlogs should be caught up with in 1975. Since 1969, the programme has been supplemented by a number of provisions not planned at the time and the need for which arose either because of technical progress or as a result of increased awareness of certain requirements for the protection of the natural environment. In some cases the initial standards were made more stringent or amended after a few years, in the light of new factors or new knowledge. The procedures for each "common standard" are necessarily rather protracted and complex. The views of all those concerned must be elicited, the manufacturers and users must be given the opportunity to make known their opinions and the agreement of all the Member States must be obtained. There is no question of "Brussels" forcing measures on anyone. After long preparatory work, the Commission approves the project for presentation to the Council (exercising its responsibility by taking decisions when the experts were not in complete agreement).

The Council then consults the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee for an opinion ; this often takes up a whole year. Finally, the draft proposal arrives before the Ministers : but that is not always the end of the story. Since a unanimous decision is necessary, if only one Member State is not in agreement, the whole decision will be blocked.

When the Directive is adopted, it becomes legally a Community law, but it is not yet in force. Time has to be allowed for the legislative systems of the Member States to incorporate the new standards into the national bodies of law and for industry to comply with them. Generally speaking, this last stage takes about a year and a half.

As one can see, it is a lengthy process. Even then it may happen that in one or another country a European standard is not applied within the time-limits laid down, owing to some administrative reason or gap in legislation.

The first common standards were adopted early in 1970 and entered into force in the second half of 1971. Quite a large number are now in force ; the procedures for others are now under way and others still are now in preparation.

In all, by the end of 1974 the Commission had presented 39 proposals to the Council, which has adopted 18 of them. Furthermore, thanks to the expedited procedure for adapting standards to technical progress, the Commission itself has amended two Directives (concerning exhaust and braking systems). What is the European vehicle like ? What are these common standards ? The main fields covered are the following :

- placing and attachment of the regulation plates and labels ;
- construction and installation of fuel tanks (including the materials from which they are made) ;
- mechanisms for rearward protection ;
- elimination of radio-electrical interference ;
- authorized sound level (maximum engine noise) ;
- exhaust systems and composition and volume of exhaust gases (particularly carbon monoxide and unburnt hydrocarbons ;
- speedometers (the margin of error must not exceed 5%) ;
- manufacture and performance of tyres ;
- construction, mounting and inspection of steering mechanisms ;
- braking systems (construction, mounting and trials) ;
- doors (resistance of locks and hinges in particular) ;
- field of vision and windscreen-wipers ;

- rear-view mirrors (dimensions and reflecting surface, shock resistance and field of vision) ;
- interior design (greater safety for the occupants of vehicles), with special provisions for headrests, seats, safety-belts, etc. ;
- external projections (door-handles, etc. should not project beyond certain limits) ;
- systems for lights and light-signals, including direction indicators ;
- fog lights, reflectors (colour stability, light intensity) ;
- acoustic warning systems (level of sound, tests, etc.) ;
- anti-theft devices (they would be made compulsory and would act on the steering, the transmission or the gear-box).

Community Directives are sometimes well in advance of anything planned at national level ; for example the compulsory duplicate braking system was proposed in Brussels when it was not yet statutorily required in any Member State, and provisions concerning air pollution by diesel engines were more severe than any national laws on the matter. This list includes both directives already adopted and those which are still before the Council. We have, however, left out of account two important projects which should be dealt with separately.

The first relates to safety glass for cars, particularly windscreens. The Directive on this subject, which was proposed as far back as 1972, has not yet been adopted because certain Member States hesitate to accept the obligatory requirement that windscreens must be made of laminated glass of the HPR type. However, all the trials have demonstrated that this type of windscreen has a very much higher safety factor ; in particular, it substantially cuts down the risk of eye-injuries. Several countries have already made the laminated windscreen compulsory (United States, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Australia, Denmark, Italy) and in other countries several car firms have decided on their own initiative to instal only this type, such as BMW, Mercedes, Citroen (for several of its models) and so on. If the experts cannot agree to produce a Community law, the problem should be laid before the Ministers as soon as possible.

The second project relates to the lead content of petrol. In order to take account of the industrial interests concerned - which are very substantial both for the oil refineries and for the car firms - the Commission has proposed that lead content should be restricted in two stages, allowing for differences between ordinary petrol and the better grades of petrol. The project was considered

reasonable by all the experts. It was presented in December 1973 and should have been adopted by 1 January 1975. Here too, intervention at political level may well be essential in order to overcome certain hesitations.

According to the time-scale laid down in the General Programme, all Directives relating to the vehicle sector (even those which are still only at the research stage) should be transmitted to the Council by the end of 1975 and the Council should adopt them by the end of 1976. At that moment the technical characteristics of motor vehicles should have been completely harmonized, technical barriers to trade should have been eliminated and the European citizen should have a choice among a variety of car-models which would be both safer and less damaging to the natural environment. The European Commission will then seek to define the main guidelines for future additions to the regulations approved, for there is no limit to the progress possible.

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PROPOSALS FOR DIRECTIVES SENT TO THE COUNCIL IN 1974

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Month sent</u>
1. Reflex reflectors for motor vehicles and their trailers .	January 1974
2. Sulphur content of certain liquid fuels	February 1974
3. Driver-perceived noise level of wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors	March 1974
4. Braking devices for wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors	June 1974
5. Fitting of lighting and light-signalling devices to wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors	June 1974
6. Scales of charges for the metrological testing of gas meters	June 1974
7. Road and rail transport tanks used as measuring containers	June 1974
8. Welded unalloyed steel gas cylinders	July 1974
9. Seamless aluminium alloy gas cylinders	July 1974
10. Statutory plates and inscriptions on motor vehicles and their trailers	August 1974
11. Reverse gears and speedometers for motor vehicles	August 1974
12. Anchorages for motor-vehicle safety belts	August 1974
13. Amendment of the Council Directive of 6 February 1970 on the permissible noise level and exhaust systems of motor vehicles	August 1974
14. Restricting the marketing and use of dangerous substances and preparations	August 1974
15. Radio interference caused by high frequency industrial apparatus (IMS)	August 1974
16. Alcoholic strength and alcoholmeters	November 1974
17. Illuminating devices for motor-vehicle registration plates	December 1974
18. Side, rear and brake lights for motor vehicles	December 1974
19. Dipped- and main-beam headlamps for motor vehicles	December 1974
20. Towing hooks on motor vehicles	December 1974
21. Type-approval of motorcycles	December 1974
22. <u>Non-electrical equipment for cooking, heating and hot-water production</u>	December 1974
23. Equipment for the instant production of hot water	December 1974
24. Roll-over protection devices (cabin and frame) for agricultural tractors	December 1974
25. Motor-vehicle safety belts	December 1974
26. Motor-vehicle head restraints	December 1974
27. Electromedical equipment	December 1974

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Month sent</u>
28. Electroradiological X-ray equipment, 10 to 400 kV	December 1974
29. Outline directive on civil engineering equipment	December 1974
30. General method of measuring noise emitted by civil engineering equipment	December 1974
31. Permissible noise level of pneumatic drills and jack hammers	December 1974
32. Pesticides (classification, labelling and packaging)	December 1974
33. Ceramic tableware, kitchenware etc. (quantities of lead and cadmium released)	December 1974

ANNEX IIDIRECTIVES ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL - SITUATION AS AT 1 JANUARY 1975

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date of adoption</u>	<u>OJ No</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Dangerous substances (classification, packaging and labelling)	27/6 1969	196/1	16/8 1967
2. Crystal glass	15/12 1969	L 326/36	29/12 1969
3. Type-approval of motor vehicles and their trailers	6/2 1970	L 42/1	23/2 1970
4. Permissible noise level and exhaust systems of motor vehicles	6/2 1970	L 42/1	23/2 1970
5. Location and affixing of rear registration plates for motor vehicles and their trailers	20/3 1970	L 76/25	6/4 1970
6. Liquid fuel tanks and rear protective devices for motor vehicles and their trailers	20/3 1970	L 76/23	6/1 1970
7. Measures to be taken against air pollution by gases from motor-vehicle spark ignition engines	20/3 1970	L 76/1	6/1 1970
8. Steering equipment for motor vehicles and their trailers	8/6 1970	L 133/10	18/6 1970
9. Audible warning devices for motor vehicles	27/7 1970	L 176/12	10/8 1970
10. Doors for motor vehicles and their trailers	27/7 1970	L 176/5	10/8 1970
11. Motor-vehicle rear-view mirror	1/3 1971	L 68/1	22/3 1971
12. Braking devices for certain categories of motor vehicles and of their trailers	26/7 1971	L 202/37	6/9 1971
13. Textiles (names)	26/7 1971	L 185/16	16/8 1971
14. Measuring instruments and methods of metrological control	26/7 1971	L 202/1	6/9 1971
15. Medium accuracy rectangular bar weights (5-50 kg) and medium accuracy cylindrical bar weights (1-10 kg)	26/7 1971	L 202/14	6/9 1971
16. Gas volume meters	26/7 1971	L 202/21	6/9 1971
17. Meters for liquids other than water	26/7 1971	L 202/32	6/9 1971
18. Ancillary equipment for meters for liquids other than water	12/10 1971	L 239/9	25/10 1971
19. Measuring of the standard mass per storage volume of grain	12/10 1971	L 239/1	25/10 1971
20. Calibration of the tanks of vessels	12/10 1971	L 239/15	25/10 1971

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date of adoption</u>	<u>OJ No</u>	<u>Date</u>
21. Units of measurement	18/10 1971	L 243/29	29/10 1971
22. Suppression of radio interference caused by spark-ignition engines	20/6 1972	L 152/15	6/7 1972
23. Textiles: methods of analysis for binary mixtures	17/7 1972	L 173/1	31/7 1972
24. Measures to be taken against the emission of pollutants from diesel engines for use in vehicles	2/8 1972	L 190/1	20/8 1972
25. Electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits	19/2 1973	L 77	26/3 1973
26. Textiles: methods of analysis of fibre mixtures	26/2 1973	L 83	30/3 1973
27. Classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous preparations (solvents)	5/5 1973	L 189/7	11/7 1973
28. Amendment to the Directive of 27 June 1967 on the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances	21/5 1973	L 167	25/6 1973
29. Non-automatic weighing machines	19/11 1973	L 335	5/12 1973
30. Material measures of length	19/11 1973	L 335	5/12 1973
31. Certification and marking of wire-ropes, chains and hooks	19/11 1973	L 335	5/12 1973
32. Detergents	22/11 1973	L 347	17/12 1973
33. Methods of testing the biodegradability of anionic surfactants	22/11 1973	L 347	17/12 1973
34. Device to prevent the unauthorized use of motor vehicles	17/12 1973	L 38	11/2 1974
35. Interior fittings of motor vehicles (interior parts of the passenger compartments other than the interior rear-view mirror, layout of controls, the roof or sliding roof, the backseat and rear part of the seats)	17/12 1973	L 38/2	11/2 1974
36. Weights of above-medium accuracy	4/3 1974	L 84	28/3 1974
37. Type-approval of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors	4/3 1974	L 84/10	28/3 1974
38. Maximum design speed of and load platforms for wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors	4/3 1974	L 84/33	28/3 1974
39. Certain parts and characteristics of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors	4/3 1974	L 84/25	28/3 1974
40. Adaption to technical progress of the Council Directive of 20 March 1970 relating to measures to be taken against air pollution by gases from spark ig-			

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date of adoption</u>	<u>OJ No</u>	<u>Date</u>
niton engines for motor vehicles	28/5 1974	L 159/61	15/6 1974
41. Interior fittings of motor vehicles II (behaviour of the steering mechanism in the event of impact)	4/6 1974	L 165/16	20/6 1974
42. Rear-view mirror for wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors	25/6 1974	L 191/1	15/7 1974
43. Field of vision and windscreen wipers for wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors	25/6 1974	L 191/5	15/7 1974
44. Interior fittings of motor vehicles III (strength of seats and of their anchorages)	22/7 1974	L 221	12/2 1974
45. External projections from motor vehicles	17/9 1974		
46. Cold-water meters	Dec. 1974		
47. Making-up of certain pre-packed liquids	Dec. 1974		
48. Bottles used as measuring containers	Dec. 1974		

ANNEX III

DIRECTIVES ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date of adoption</u>	<u>OJ No</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Adaptation to technical progress of the Council Directive of 6 February 1970 on the permissible noise level and exhaust systems of motor vehicles	7/11 1973	L 321/33	22/11 1973
2. Adaptation to technical progress of the Council Directive of 26 July 1971 on the braking of certain categories of motor vehicles and their trailers	11/2 1974	L 74/7	19/3 1974
3. Adaptation to technical progress of the Council Directive of 26 July 1971 (71/318/EEC) on gas volume meters	12/6 1974	L 189	12/7 1974

ANNEX: IV

AS YET UNADOPTED PROPOSALS FOR DIRECTIVES  
ADDRESSED TO THE COUNCIL

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date sent</u>
1. Direction indicators for motor vehicles and their trailers	July 1965
2. Clinical thermometers	April 1966
3. Oil pipelines	July 1968
4. Field of vision, windscreen wipers and washers of motor vehicles	August 1968.
5. Electrical connections for motor-vehicle trailers	August 1968
6. Electrical equipment used in explosive atmospheres	October 1970
7. Wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors (crew seats)	March 1966
8. Certain characteristics and parts of wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors: towable weight, steering, protection of power units and projecting moving parts, electrical connection for trailer lighting and light-signalling devices, cabin, driver's seat, radio-interference suppressor, coupling device	July 1968
9. Reinforced plastic tankers intended for the carriage by road of dangerous substances	December 1971
10. Fertilizers - general directive	December 1971
11. Radio interference caused by household electrical appliances and hand tools	July 1972
12. Radio interference caused by fluorescent lamps used for lighting purposes	July 1972
13. Safety glass for motor vehicles	September 1972
14. Cosmetic products	October 1972
15. Pressure vessels: outline directive	January 1973
16. Seamless steel gas cylinders	January 1973
17. Type approval of mopeds	January 1973
18. Electricity meters	February 1973
19. Aerosols	March 1973
20. Radio interference caused by radio receivers	May 1973
21. Weighing instruments of the continuously additive type	May 1973
22. Amendment to the Council Directive of 27 June 1967 on dangerous substances	July 1973

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date sent</u>
23. The making-up by weight or by volume of certain pre-packaged products	October 1973
24. Petrol for spark-ignition engines for motor vehicles	December 1973
25. Fitting of lighting and light-signalling devices to motor vehicles and their trailers	December 1973
26. Fog lamps for motor vehicles	December 1973
27. Reflex reflectors for motor vehicles and their trailers	January 1974
28. Sulphur content of certain liquid fuels	February 1974
29. Permissible driver-perceived noise level of wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors	March 1974
30. Braking devices for wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors	June 1974
31. Fitting of lighting and light-signalling devices to wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors	June 1974
32. Scales of changes for the metrological testing of gas meters	June 1974
33. Road and rail transport tanks used as measuring containers	June 1974
34. Welded unalloyed steel gas cylinders	July 1974
35. Seamless aluminium alloy gas cylinders	July 1974
36. Statutory plates and inscriptions for motor vehicles and their trailers	August 1974
37. Reverse gears and speedometers for motor vehicles	August 1974
38. Anchorages for motor-vehicle safety belts	August 1974
39. Amendment to the Council Directive of 6 February 1970 on the permissible noise level and exhaust systems of motor vehicles	August 1974
40. Restricting the marketing and use of dangerous substances and preparations	August 1974
41. Radio interference caused by high-frequency industrial apparatus (IMS)	August 1974
42. Alcoholic strength and alcoholmeters	November 1974
43. Illuminating devices for motor-vehicle registration plates	December 1974
44. Side, rear and brake lights for motor vehicles and their trailers	December 1974
45. Motor-vehicle headlamps having an asymmetrical dipped beam and a main beam, or one or other of these beams, together with incandescent headlamp bulbs	December 1974

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date sent</u>
46. Towing hooks for motor vehicles	Decemver 1974
47. Type approval of motorcycles	December 1974
48. Non-electrical equipment for cooking, heating and hot water production (outline directive)	December 1974
49. Equipment for the instant production of hot water	December 1974
50. Roll-over protection devices for wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors (strength of protection devices in the event of roll-over, and their mounting on the tractor)	December 1974
51. Safety belts and restraint systems for motor vehicles	December 1974
52. Head restraints for motor vehicles	December 1974
53. Electromedical equipment	December 1974
54. Electroradiological X-ray equipment, 10-400 kV	December 1974
55. Outline directive on civil engineering equipment	December 1974
56. General method of measuring noise emitted by civil engineering equipment	December 1974
57. Permissible noise level of pneumatic drills and jack hammers	December 1974
58. Pesticides (classification, labelling and packaging)	December 1974
59. Ceramic ware intended to come in contact with food-stuffs (restriction of quantities of lead and cadmium released)	December 1974