



*European Communities  
Commission  
Press Release*

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Domestic minibuses may be exempted from tachograph rules

As far as domestic use is concerned, the United Kingdom will be free to exempt minibuses of up to 15 seats (including the driver's) from using a tachograph and applying EEC rules on drivers' hours. The European Commission has given a 'favourable opinion' on the request for exemption submitted by the British Government.

The exemption does not apply to minibuses travelling to another member country of the European Community. The Commission much regrets that holiday plans should have been upset by the inability of many United Kingdom based minibuses to meet the tachograph regulation, but points out that the legislative programme has been established for several years.

Use of the tachograph in minibuses

The Community regulations on drivers' hours and tachographs are intended to improve working conditions in road transport, promote fair competition and reduce accidents. With certain exceptions, they cover passenger vehicles for more than nine people, including privately used vehicles such as minibuses.

However, under an amendment to the regulations made by the Council of Ministers at the end of 1977, member states may, after consulting the Commission, exempt some vehicles, including passenger vehicles designed to carry up to 15 people, from these regulations when used within the country of registration.

The Commission's opinion agrees Italian and British proposals to exempt passenger vehicles with up to 15 seats including the driver from the tachograph regulations and to a United Kingdom proposal to exempt these vehicles from the drivers' hours regulations.

It must be emphasized that these exemptions only apply to vehicles used within the country of registration. As from January 1, 1978, the regulations required passenger vehicles for more than nine people including the driver visiting other member states to be equipped with tachographs and drivers to observe the prescribed driving hours, breaks and rest periods. Furthermore, some member states have stated their intention to retain the tachograph in vehicles for 10-15 people for road safety reasons and can be expected to enforce its use in both home-registered and visiting vehicles.

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The tachograph regulation was adopted by the Council of Ministers of the original six member states in July 1970. When the United Kingdom and the two other new member states joined the Community in January 1973, the Act of Accession provided for the introduction of the tachograph in those countries in newly registered vehicles by January 1, 1976 (one year later than in the original six) and for all vehicles covered by the regulation by January 1, 1978 (as elsewhere in the Community).

It is apparent from correspondence in the press and letters to the Commission that the public in the United Kingdom was largely unprepared for the introduction of the tachograph in minibuses, particularly for trips to other member states, by January 1, 1978.

"The Commission is eager to promote contacts between the peoples of the Community and regrets that holiday plans should have been upset through the inability of many United Kingdom based minibuses to meet the tachograph regulation. However, responsibility for ensuring compliance with Community law rests with the member government concerned and the programme for introducing the tachograph was agreed in 1973 when the United Kingdom joined the Community."

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