Motor vehicles: type-approval of hydrogen-powered vehicles

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The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection adopted a report drafted by Anja **WEISGERBER** (EPP-ED/DE) and, in the framework of the codecsion procedure, made some amendments to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on type-approval of hydrogen powered motor vehicles and amending Directive 2007/46/EC.

The main amendments, which chiefly concern new recitals, are as follows:

- the CARS 21 High Level Group final report1 stated that efforts with a view to increasing international harmonisation of motor vehicle regulations should be maintained where appropriate, with a view to involve the key vehicle markets and to extend harmonisation to areas not yet covered, notably both in the framework of the 1958 and the 1998 Agreements of the UNECE. In line with this recommendation, the Commission should continue to support the development of internationally harmonised requirements for motor vehicles under the auspices of UNECE. In particular, if a Global Technical Regulation (GTR) on hydrogen and fuel cell vehicles is adopted, the Commission should consider the possibility of adapting the requirements of this Regulation to those of that GTR;
- innovative small vehicles, designated under EC type-approval legislation as L category vehicles, are considered as early adopters of hydrogen as a fuel. This is because introducing hydrogen for these vehicles requires less effort, as the technical challenge and level of investment required is not as high as with cars. The Commission should, no later than 1 January 2010, evaluate the possibility of regulating the type-approval of hydrogen L category vehicles;
- hydrogen powered vehicles are unlikely to be successful on the market unless adequate filling station infrastructure is available in Europe. The Commission should therefore look into suitable measures to support the establishment of a Europe-wide filling-station network for hydrogen powered vehicles;
- the committee introduced an obligation for the Commission to adopt identification requirements for hydrogen vehicles through the regulatory procedure with scrutiny to ensure that hydrogen vehicles are recognised by rescue services. In addition, it was specified that it must be possible for rescue services to identify the hydrogen power source of a vehicle;
- hydrogen mixtures could be used as a transition fuel to facilitate the introduction of hydrogen powered vehicles in countries where there is a good natural gas infrastructure. The Commission should therefore develop requirements for the use of mixtures of hydrogen and natural gas /biomethane, especially a mixing ratio of hydrogen and gas which takes account of technical feasibility and environmental benefits;
- in the future, hydrogen powered vehicles should be vehicles propelled by pure hydrogen produced as far as possible from renewable energies. Use of mixtures of hydrogen and natural gas/biomethane to propel vehicles must be no more than a transitional technology;
- the definition of "hydrogen powered vehicle" is amended to mean any motor vehicle that uses hydrogen as fuel to propel the vehicle. The Commission had defined it as any motor vehicle that uses pure hydrogen or a mixture of hydrogen and natural gas as fuel to propel the vehicle;
- hydrogen leakage detection sensors are subject to type-approval;
- lastly, the obligation to typeapprove components is limited to those using compressed (gaseous) hydrogen at a pressure higher than 3.0 MPa.