

Motor vehicles: type-approval of hydrogen-powered vehicles

2007/0214(COD) - 14/01/2009 - Final act

PURPOSE: to incorporate hydrogen vehicles of categories M and N in the EU whole vehicle type approval framework.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation (EC) No 79/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on type-approval of hydrogen-powered motor vehicles, and amending Directive 2007/46/EC.

CONTENT: the text underlines that hydrogen is considered as a clean way of powering vehicles for the future, on the way towards a pollution-free economy based on the reuse of raw materials and on renewable energy resources, as vehicles propelled with hydrogen emit neither carbon-based pollutants nor greenhouse gases.

Since hydrogen is an energy vector and not an energy source, the climate-policy value of hydrogen power depends on the source from which the hydrogen is obtained. Care should therefore be taken that hydrogen fuel is produced in a sustainable manner, as far as possible from renewable energy resources, so that the overall environmental balance of introducing hydrogen as a fuel for motor vehicles is positive.

Following the agreement reached at first reading with the European Parliament, the Regulation establishes requirements for the type-approval of motor vehicles with regard to hydrogen propulsion and for the type-approval of hydrogen components and hydrogen systems. It also establishes requirements for the installation of such components and systems.

For the purposes of this Regulation, ‘hydrogen-powered vehicle’ shall mean any motor vehicle that uses hydrogen as fuel to propel the vehicle.

This Regulation shall apply to:

- hydrogen-powered vehicles of categories M and N, as defined in Section A of Annex II to Directive 2007/46/EC, including impact protection and the electric safety of such vehicles;
- hydrogen components designed for motor vehicles of categories M and N, as listed in Annex I;
- hydrogen systems designed for motor vehicles of categories M and N, including new forms of hydrogen storage or usage.

Manufacturers shall ensure that hydrogen components and systems are designed in such a way that they can be installed in accordance with the requirements of Annex VI on the requirements for the installation of hydrogen components and systems.

From a technical point of view, the Commission shall adopt specific implementing measures which will contain more precise technical requirements to vehicles and their hydrogen systems. Those measures shall be adopted in accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny.

The Commission shall be empowered to: (i) establish the requirements and test procedures relating to new forms of hydrogen storage or usage, additional hydrogen components and the propulsion system; (ii) establish specific procedures, tests and requirements with regard to the impact protection of hydrogen-powered vehicles and integrated system safety requirements.

The Regulation provides for transitional periods to allow vehicle manufacturers sufficient time.

The text underlines that **innovative small vehicles**, designated under EC type-approval legislation as L category vehicles, are considered as early users of hydrogen as a fuel. The Commission should, no later than 1 January 2010, evaluate the possibility of regulating the type-approval of hydrogen L category vehicles.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 24/02/2009.

APPLICATION: from 24/02/2011, with the exception of certain measures which shall apply from the date of entry into force of this Regulation or from 24/02/2012.