Labelling of tyres: fuel efficiency

2008/0221(COD) - 22/04/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 642 votes to 23, with 8 abstentions, a legislative resolution amending, under the first reading of the codecision procedure, the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on labelling of tyres with respect to fuel efficiency and other essential parameters.

The main amendments are as follows:

Adopting a Regulation: MEPs recommend choosing a Regulation as the instrument, instead of a Directive. That should ensure a standard level of tyre quality.

Savings calculator: in order to increase understanding and awareness about rolling resistance, a fuel savings calculator, such as that which already exists for C3 tyres, would serve as a meaningful tool to demonstrate potential savings of fuel, money and CO2.

Snow tyres and Nordic winter tyres: snow tyres and Nordic winter tyres have specific parameters that are not fully comparable to normal tyres. In order to ensure that end-users make fair and informed decisions, the parameters of these tyres should be displayed in a way that puts them on an equal footing with normal tyres.

Tyre labelling website: according to MEPs, potential purchasers should be provided with supplementary standardised information which explains each of the components of the label - fuel efficiency, wet grip and noise emissions. The Commission shall establish and administer, no later than September 2010, the "EU tyre labelling website" as a reference source of explanatory information for each component of the label. The website shall include:

- an explanation of the pictograms printed on the label;
- a fuel savings calculator which demonstrates potential savings of fuel, money and CO2 by fitting low rolling resistance tyres for C1, C2 and C3 tyre classes;
- a statement highlighting the fact that actual fuel savings and road safety heavily depend on drivers' behaviour, in particular: (i) eco-driving, which can significantly reduce fuel consumption; (ii) tyre pressure, that should be regularly checked for higher wet grip and fuel efficiency performance characteristics; (iii) stopping distances, that should always be strictly respected.

This information should also be provided on explanatory leaflets and posters at all points of sale.

Informing the public: suppliers shall ensure that C1 and C2 tyres delivered to distributors or end-users are supplied with a label to be displayed by any means or by a sticker on the tyre tread, indicating the fuel efficiency and wet grip class and the external rolling noise measured value. For C2 and C3 tyres, the measured rolling resistance coefficient shall also be stated.

Moreover, suppliers shall present measured values from the type approval test with regard to the rolling resistance coefficient (expressed in kg/t), wet grip index (expressed as a performance index, G, compared to the standard reference tyre) and noise emissions (expressed in dB) in a publicly available database.

Responsibilities of vehicle suppliers and vehicle distributors: where end-users are offered a choice between different tyre types to be fitted on a new vehicle, one of the following points shall apply:

(a) where end-users are offered a choice between different tyre/rim sizes but not between other parameters of the tyre type, the information shall mention for each tyre/rim size the lowest fuel efficiency class, wet grip class and highest external rolling noise measured value of all tyre types within this tyre/rim size;

(b) except in cases covered by point (a), the information shall mention the fuel efficiency class, wet grip class and external rolling noise measured value of all tyre types which may be chosen by the end-user.

Testing methods: the harmonised tests shall provide end-users with a reliable and fully representative ranking of the characteristics tested.

Verification procedure: to give legal certainty to car- and tyre manufacturers, it has to be clear that controls should not lead to Member States blocking type approved cars and tyres from free circulation in the EU.

Inspections: Member States shall ensure that the competent authorities establish a system of routine and non-routine inspections of points of sale for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the requirements of this Regulation.

Implementation and penalties: to ensure a level playing field for all tyre manufacturers, both within the Community and vis-à-vis their international competitors, MEPs believe that it is of the utmost importance that the provisions of this Regulation be vigorously enforced in each and every Member State. To this end, Member States shall, by means of a continuous exchange of information, ensure close cooperation in market supervision. They shall take appropriate measures for regular ex-post controls in order to ensure that tyres which are not duly labelled are brought into conformity or taken off the market. They shall also introduce measures laying down sanctions for infringements of the provisions of this Regulation.

Member States should strive, in implementing the relevant provisions of this Regulation, to refrain from measures that impose unjustified, bureaucratic and unwieldy obligations on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

According to MEPs, tyre manufacturers, suppliers and distributors should be encouraged to comply with the provisions of this Regulation before 2012 to speed up the recognition of the scheme and realisation of its benefits.

Review: not later than three years after the date of application of this Regulation, the Commission shall review its application, considering inter alia: (a) the effectiveness of the label in terms of consumer awareness; (b) whether the labelling scheme should be extended to include retreaded tyres; (c) whether new tyre parameters or classes should be introduced; (d) the information on tyre parameters provided by vehicle suppliers and distributors to end-users.

The Commission shall, on the basis of this review and after an impact assessment and a consumer survey, submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council, accompanied if appropriate, by a proposal for amendment of this Regulation.

Transposition: this Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union and shall apply from 1 November 2012. However, Articles 4 (responsibilities of tyre suppliers) and 5 (responsibilities of tyre distributors) shall not apply to tyres produced before 1 July 2012.