Real Driving Emissions (RDE)

2019/0101(COD) - 17/09/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 485 votes to 169, with 42 abstentions, amendments, to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 715/2007 on type approval of motor vehicles with respect to emissions from light passenger and commercial vehicles (Euro 5 and Euro 6) and on access to vehicle repair and maintenance information.

The matter was referred back to the committee responsible for inter-institutional negotiations.

As a reminder, the Commission's proposal aims to reintroduce legal exemptions (via a compliance factor) concerning nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions from passenger cars and light commercial vehicles (Euro 5 and Euro 6) for vehicles tested under real driving conditions, in order to comply with the judgment of the Court of the European Union of 13 December 2018.

The amendments adopted in plenary are as follows:

Compliance factor

In order to address the technical uncertainties associated with measurements obtained using portable emission measurement systems (PEMS), which measure engine emissions during use, the Commission introduced the ‘conformity factor’ - which allows for a margin of error for higher emissions measured under real driving conditions.

Members introduced amendments to clarify that the compliance factor shall apply for a transitional period and be subject to a margin corresponding to the additional technical measurement uncertainties linked with the introduction of the Portable Emission Measurement Systems (PEMS).

The Commission shall continuously review this conformity factor in the light of technical progress and review it downwards each year on the basis of assessments by the Joint Research Centre (JRC). After an immediate reduction from 1.43 to 1.32, the conformity factor shall cease to apply by 30 September 2022.

The Commission may adopt delegated acts by 1 June 2021 at the latest to complete the Regulation in order to:

- adapt the procedures, tests and requirements, as well as the test cycles used to measure emissions so as to properly reflect emissions under real driving conditions under normal use, including temperature and boundary conditions,

- lower the zero response drift and addressing hazardous spikes in particles resulting from filter cleaning, taking into account any relevant elements of standardisation developed by CEN and based on best available equipment.

Members also stressed that the manufacturer shall also ensure the reliability of pollution control devices and endeavour to reduce the risk of theft or damage to these devices.

Post-Euro 6 proposal

In order to ensure swift progress towards the adoption of the future (post - Euro 6) emission limit values and improved air quality for Union citizens, Parliament called on the Commission to present, where

appropriate, a legislative proposal to that effect as soon as possible and at the latest by June 2021, as announced in its ‘European Green Deal’.

In order to encourage the producers to have a proactive, pro-environmental attitude, the new technological innovations meant to absorb NOx shall be tested, quantified and considered in the subsequent revision of Euro standards.

Diesel vehicles

Parliament recalled that following recent violations of the existing legal framework by manufacturers, consumers have not been satisfactorily compensated. Even in cases where compensation has been granted, vehicles have rarely been brought into line with Euro 5 and Euro 6 standards.

Since the increasing number of diesel bans across European cities affect citizens’ daily life, Members suggested adequate compensation measures would be the equipment of non-compliant vehicles with the adapted exhaust treatment technology (hardware change) or, in the event that the consumer wished to exchange a purchased vehicle for a cleaner model, the offer of conversion premiums.

Parliament recalled that the 2019 air quality report published by the European Environment Agency (EEA) estimated that in 2016 long-term exposure to air pollution was responsible for more than 506 000 premature deaths in the EU-28. Road transport continued to be the primary source of NOx emissions in the EU-28 in 2017, representing around 40 % of total EU NOx emissions, and that around 80 % of the total NOx emission from road transport is generated by diesel powered vehicles.