Implementation report on the road safety aspects of the Roadworthiness Package

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the own-initiative report by Benoît LUTGEN (EPP, BE) on the implementation report on the road safety aspects of the Roadworthiness Package.

This report focuses on the legal transposition and the concrete functioning of the Roadworthiness Package in the EU-27 Member States from a road safety perspective.

The report sets out a number of recommendations.

Transposition and implementation of the Roadworthiness Package – EU safety objectives

Members welcomed the fact that the transposition of the Roadworthiness Package and the implementation of some of its provisions have shown an improved harmonisation of national procedures, in particular as far as the frequency, content and method of vehicle inspection tests is concerned. The Package has helped to improve the quality of the periodic technical inspections, the qualification level of inspectors, and Member States' coordination and standards relating to roadside inspection of vehicles, in order to enhance road safety.

On the other hand, Members regretted the fact that, despite the better quality of the periodic technical inspections and the positive implications of this for road safety, the Roadworthiness Package contains some non-mandatory provisions that have not been transposed with sufficient stringency or simply not been transposed at all. The report highlighted the need to develop a system of obligatory requirements to increase the harmonisation at EU level of aspects such as cargo securing, information exchange and cooperation between the Member States, and recalled the particular importance of these measures for cross-border regions.

Inadequate financing for inspection activities, including inspection staff, equipment and training, continues to jeopardise the achievement of Roadworthiness objectives. Member States are called on to put sufficient financial and administrative support at the disposal of their road safety authorities to efficiently implement the Roadworthiness Package and its future revised version.

Frequency and content of tests

While welcoming the fact that following the entry into force of the Roadworthiness Package, 90 % of vehicle inspections have occurred according to the same intervals as or at even more stringent intervals than those set by the Package, contributing to a large extent to reducing the number of unsafe vehicles circulating on EU roads, Members regretted that some Member States still require longer intervals than those set by the Package, reducing safety on running conditions.

The Commission is called on to:

- consider tightening the test regime and introducing the obligation of additional checks after reaching a specified mileage for vehicles of category M1 in use as a taxi or ambulance and vehicles of category N1 used by parcel delivery service providers;

- consider extending this obligation to other vehicles within these categories in use for further commercial purposes;

- assess whether the frequency of inspections of these vehicles used for shared mobility should be increased, by including a possibility for an annual mandatory inspection or by reflecting for example the intensity of their circulation in terms of mileage and the related obsolescence of components, as well as the quantity of passengers transported;

- incorporate an EU certification for second-hand cars into the next revision of the Roadworthiness Package;

- consider extending the obligation to conduct roadside inspections to two- and three-wheel vehicles, including the 5 % minimum yearly inspection target, as these vehicles are currently completely excluded from the scope of Directive 2014/47/EU;

- take due account of the new emissions tests in real driving conditions provided for in the Euro 6 regulation and possible future revisions;

Equipment used and training of inspectors

Members welcomed the fact that in all Member States testing equipment has been harmonised and fulfils certain minimum requirements, thus improving the uniformity of roadworthiness checks across the EU. However, not all Member States have introduced minimum qualifications for inspectors carrying out roadworthiness checks. Steps should be taken to guarantee the independence of inspectors and inspection organisations from the vehicle trade, maintenance and repair industry to avoid any financial conflicts of interest, including for checking emissions, while providing stronger safeguards in terms of civil liability for all parts.

Information records and data exchange between the Member States

The report noted that only a few Member States keep a national electronic database of the major and dangerous deficiencies brought to light by roadside inspections and that Member States seldom notify the results of these inspections to the national contact point of the Member State in which the vehicle is registered. Member States should facilitate systematic data exchange on roadworthiness testing and odometer readings between their respective competent authorities for testing, registration and vehicle approval, test equipment manufacturers and vehicle manufacturers.

Members called on the Commission and the Member States to work to ensure that a Vehicle Information Platform is set up as part of the next revision to expedite and facilitate data exchange and ensure more effective coordination between the Member States.

Technical progress

Due account should be taken of the technical progress in vehicle safety features for the next revision. New vehicles should start being equipped with new advanced safety and driver assistance systems from 2022.