



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from : General Secretariat
to : Delegations

Subject : Review of Directive 2001/43/EC relating to tyres for motor vehicles and their trailers and to their fitting: noise from tyres

Delegations will find annexed information from the Netherlands delegation on the above subject, which will be dealt with under "other business" at the meeting of the Council (Environment) on 30 October 2007.

**Review of Directive 2001/43/EC relating to tyres for motor vehicles and their trailers
and to their fitting: noise from tyres**

Noise pollution is a serious health problem, certainly in densely-populated localities. Research has shown that noise pollution is the second most harmful form of environmental pollution in the Netherlands, with an annual loss of 30,000 healthy life years.

The biggest cause of noise pollution is road traffic. Around 35% of Europe's population is so exposed to road traffic noise that their quality of life is harmed. A lot of people live beside busy roads. If we are to protect them, noise levels will have to be reduced, preferably by making cars and trucks quieter.

Solutions applied at source are cheaper and more effective than end-of-pipe solutions such as constructing sound barriers. The biggest source of traffic noise – and the one we need to tackle first – is that of car tyres rolling faster than 30 to 40 kph.

It can be done quickly, because the Commission is revising Directive 2001/43/EC with regard to tyre-rolling noise. The Directive's current requirements are generally considered to be too weak. They provide no incentive to reduce the problem, nor do they give any direction for doing so. The Commission bases its views on a report produced for it by FEHRL (Forum of European National Highway Research Laboratories)

FEHRL recommends reducing the noise limits up to 6.5 dB(A), which would make road traffic two to three dB(A) quieter. This would be an important gain and would tie in with the action plans based on EU Directive 2002/49/EC on environmental noise. In the Netherlands alone, this step would mean that 300,000 fewer people would be suffering from serious noise pollution – a gain in healthy life years of more than 10,000.

FEHRL also says that we can significantly strengthen the requirements without harming road safety or increasing energy consumption. Reducing tyre-rolling noise to the level recommended would have no impact on road safety or energy consumption.

In the period up to 18 October 2007, the Commission held a broad consultation round on all aspects of tyres. The Commission is now using the results to evaluate the Directive and propose a revision to it.

As well as endorsing the noise requirements proposed, the Netherlands supports the introduction of requirements for rolling resistance, energy consumption and tyre safety. The proposal for rolling resistance is not very stringent, but sufficient as a first step. It needs to be tightened up as soon as possible.

As to the implementing process, the Netherlands is urging the Commission to complete its evaluation of the Directive as soon as possible and to come up with a wide-ranging proposal representing all aspects of the consultation round. Since the parts of the proposal concerning noise and safety are already known, they can be incorporated without further ado in a legislative proposal.

Given the importance of noise pollution to the public, we must do our best to anchor the stricter requirements proposed by FEHRL in legislation as soon as possible.