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ACEM Position on the revision of directive 2009/40/EC on roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles

Roadworthiness testing and historic motorcycles

In many of the EU member states there is great interest in the collection and use of historic vehicles. This is particularly true of motorcycles. There are potential problems for the collectors and users of these motorcycles that could arise from the proposal to include motorcycles in the EU Directive on Roadworthiness Testing. There is a need to recognise the social cultural value of historic motorcycles, the need for special arrangements to be made for them when EU type approved parts are no longer available from the manufacturers.

Motorcycle types (models) are sold in very small volumes compared to the volumes per type achieved in the car sector. Certain components on motorcycles are required to be EU type approved, (e.g. the exhaust system). Such components are required to carry a marking to indicate compliance with the relevant EU or ECE Directive or Regulation.

While some types of motorcycle have an intrinsic technical value, illustrating significant steps in the engineering development of the motorcycles, even though these may not have sold in large numbers (e.g. Suzuki RE5, Yamaha GTS), others, the "ordinary" vehicles, acquire with age a social and cultural value. As these "historic vehicles" age so their annual mileage declines. They also have an educational, and cultural use in films etc. Roadworthiness testing should not legislate them off the road, rather it should facilitate their continued safe use for future generations. Today's motorcycles are tomorrow's historic motorcycles.

The problem

The original equipment manufacturer will maintain the supply of these marked parts as part of their customer service support for a substantial period (10-20 years depending on the manufacturer and the sales success of the type), **if the manufacturer has remained in business.**

Aftermarket suppliers will also provide some EU approved options, but only for the models that have sold in larger numbers. As mentioned above, the sales of motorcycle types are small compared to cars, and there are many after-market manufacturers, who must compete not only with each other but also with the OE manufacturer. The aftermarket supply may well cease well before that of the OE manufacturer.

It is important that the road worthiness test does not drive these vehicles off the road as soon as the supply of type approved components dries up.

The solution

It is proposed that a definition is created for the "**historic motorcycle**", (the term motorcycle to include mopeds and scooters) in the Roadworthiness Directive. It is proposed that any motorcycle 25 or more years old would fall under this definition. Such motorcycles constitute 10.7% of licensed motorcycles in the UK, those registered prior to 1979 7.6%, these amount to 139,000 units and 98,000 units respectively.

For some components such as the exhaust system, when no marking is present an objective test regime would be required such as a static sound test. Such an arrangement will permit future generations to use and enjoy their motorcycling heritage.