European Transport Safety Council

Press release

18 December 2013, For immediate use

EU U-turn on mandatory safety checks for motorcycles

Brussels – The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) says the EU's rejection of regular mandatory technical checks on motorcycles and scooters is a missed opportunity for reducing road deaths in Europe.

EU lawmakers agreed this afternoon on a final deal on the 'Roadworthiness package' of legislation, originally proposed by the European Commission in October 2012. The agreement says 'heavy' motorcycles should be tested from 2022, but even after almost a decade has passed, member states will still not be forced to introduce the checks if they can show they have introduced alternative 'road safety measures'.

Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of ETSC said:
"Today's decision is bad news for road safety. Regular technical checks for these vehicles would help prevent unnecessary deaths and life-changing injuries.

"The European Parliament and member states have been very short-sighted with this decision, as motorcycles and scooters are a growing segment of the EU vehicle fleet. In a few years, these ageing bikes will be on the road in large numbers, without any mandatory requirement for safety checks in 11 countries. We strongly urge those countries to introduce safety checks for these vehicles as soon as possible."

Currently only 16 EU member states require motorcycle owners to get their vehicles checked for roadworthiness. Countries including France, the Netherlands and Portugal have no testing requirements at all.

In 2009 powered two-wheeler (PTW) riders represented 17% of the total number of road deaths while accounting for only 2% of the total kilometres driven (1).

Research has shown that technical failures of PTWs can have much more severe consequences than those for cars, and the condition of the vehicle can influence the consequences and the severity of an average occurrence (2). Out of all the crashes analysed between 2005 and 2009, the Danish Accident Investigation Board has attributed 12% of fatal crashes to technical defects (faulty lights, tyres or brakes). Data from the Finnish Transport Agency show that out of 35 fatal moped crashes (2006-2008), one third involved tampered vehicles. Between 2006 and 2012 in Denmark, 17% of all moped crashes resulting in deaths or serious injuries involved vehicles that had been tampered with - some 800 vehicles (3). The number could be higher as many such collisions are not reported to the

police. These collisions might have been prevented if compulsory technical inspections had been in place.

ETSC has also criticised a failure to include vans (Light Goods Vehicles) in the roadside checks required for other professional vehicles such as lorries and buses. The latest data on collisions involving light goods vehicles show that the number of deaths is on a par with those involving heavy goods vehicles (4).

Notes to editors:

(1) See ETSC report: http://etsc.eu/documents/ETSC_Position_on_L-category_vehicles.pdf

(2) See ETSC position paper: http://etsc.eu/documents/Roadworthiness Package_ETSC.pdf

(3) Source: http://www.statistikbanken.dk/statbank5a/default.asp?w=1280

(4) See ETSC Road Safety PIN Flash report (No.24):
http://www.etsc.eu/documents/ETSC_PIN_Flash_24.pdf

- In 2007, more than 2.7 million powered two wheel vehicles (PTWs) were sold in the European Union, following six years of continuous growth (+22 % over the period 2002 – 2007). The PTW fleet now accounts for 33 million vehicles in use in the EU. According to long term market projections, the fleet is expected to grow and reach between 35 and 37 million vehicles in 2020.
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/automotive/files/consultation/2_3_wheelers/acem_en.pdf

- For information on current testing requirements for cars and powered two wheelers across the EU, see: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-555_en.htm

For further information:

Dudley Curtis, Communications Manager
dudley.curtis@etsc.eu
+32 485 379945