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PRESS RELEASE

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Road safety: Tougher vehicle testing rules to save lives

Vehicle checks are fundamental to road safety. More than 5 people die on Europe's roads every day in accidents linked to technical failure. So today the European Commission has adopted new rules to toughen up the testing regime and widen its scope.

Technical defects contribute heavily to accidents. They are responsible for 6% of all car accidents, translating into 2,000 fatalities and many more injuries yearly. 8 % of all motorcycle accidents are linked to technical defects.

The main problem is that there are simply too many vehicles with technical defects on the road. Recent studies from the UK and Germany indicate that up to 10% of cars at any point in time have a defect that would cause them to fail the tests. Moreover, many technical defects with serious implications for safety (such as ABS and Electronic Stability Control) are not even checked under current rules.

Existing EU rules setting minimum standards for vehicle checks date back to 1977, with only minor updates. Cars, driver behaviour and technology have developed a lot since then.

The new proposals

The new proposals aim to save more than 1,200 lives a year and to avoid more than 36,000 accidents linked to technical failure.

Vice President Siim Kallas responsible for Transport said, *"If you're driving a car which is not fit to be on the road, you're a danger to yourself and to everyone else in your car – your family, your friends, your business colleagues. What's more, you're a danger to all the other road users around you. It's not complicated; we don't want these potentially lethal cars on our roads."*

Key elements of the new proposals include

- Compulsory EU wide testing for scooters and motorbikes. Motorbike and scooter riders, particularly young riders, are the highest risk group of road users.
- Increasing the frequency of periodic roadworthiness tests for old vehicles. Between 5 and 6 years, the number of serious accidents related to technical failure increases dramatically (see graph in [MEMO/12/555](#) attached).
- Increasing the frequency of tests for cars and vans with exceptionally high mileage. This will bring their tests in line with other high mileage vehicles such as taxis, ambulances etc.
- Improving the quality of vehicle tests by setting common minimum standards for deficiencies, equipment and inspectors.
- Making electronic safety components subject to mandatory testing.
- Clamping down on mileage fraud, with registered mileage readings.

In all cases, the proposals set common EU wide minimum standards for vehicle checks, with Member States free to go further if appropriate.

Background

Existing EU rules on vehicle checks date from 1977, they set minimum standards for vehicle checks and have only been marginally updated since. There are three main pieces of legislation:

- [Directive 2009/40/EC](#) fixes minimum standards for the periodic roadworthiness tests of motor vehicles - these are the regular vehicle checks required by law. The Directive applies to passenger cars, buses and coaches and heavy goods vehicles and their trailers, but not to scooters and motorbikes.
- [Directive 2009/40/EC](#) is complemented by [Directive 2000/30/EC](#), which provides the requirement to control the technical state of commercial vehicles in between periodic inspections (with technical roadside inspections). These are additional on-the-spot roadside checks for commercial vehicles.
- [Directive 1999/37/EC](#) on registration documents for vehicles sets out the requirements for the issuing of registration certificates, their mutual recognition and the harmonised minimum content of vehicle registration certificates.

For more info

[MEMO/12/555](#)

For the most recent data on road fatalities (2011) by Member States see [IP/12/326](#).

[Website of the Directorate-General Mobility and Transport](#)

[Website of Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Transport Siim Kallas](#)

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