

European Tyre Manufacturers express concerns regarding noise limits affecting road safety

Brussels, 23 May 2008- ETRMA (European Tyre and Rubber Manufacturers' Association) is concerned by most of the tyre noise requirements as laid down in the European Commission proposed Regulation on advanced safety features for motor vehicles, released today.

The European tyre industry is committed to continue contributing to the global efforts towards reduction of CO2 emissions from vehicles, while continue improving the safety performances. In this respect, the introduction of requirements for Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems, low rolling resistance tyres and wet grip in the Commission proposal is fully supported by the Industry

However, the European tyre manufacturers believe that too stringent noise specifications as based on a report prepared by FEHRL, a body focused on road engineering, would jeopardize vehicle and consumers' safety.

The Commission proposal in certain categories asks for reduction up to 5dB(A), compared to current limits. A reduction of 5dB(A) means sound intensity reduced by 67%, which is the same difference as listening to a passenger car with less than 1 tyre instead of 4 ! As a recent study performed by TÜV- to be published, shows that most of the limits proposed by the current draft may lead to an increase in braking distance on wet roads, to a decrease in aquaplaning performance or poorer traction in winter.

This issue concerning the rolling noise for the tyre industry is not linked to costs: a silent tyre is not more expensive to manufacture than current products: the issue is road safety.

In this regard, the industry strongly believes that a combined effort with the Member States in the areas of road construction and its technical specifications would be by far more timely and cost effective to dramatically reduce tyre road noise intensity.

The Tyre Industry urges the EU governments and the European Parliament to take up this challenge through the next institutional debates in ensuring the adoption of a technically feasible and balanced Regulation that can allow both enhanced safety performances of tyres for road users and environmentally performances. The tyre industry welcomes the initiative of the Commission to assess thoroughly the key findings of still on-going industry studies and to support adaptations necessary to avoid any negative impact on road safety.

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