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Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Regulation No. 55 (Mechanical couplings)

Proposal for amendment to Regulation No. 55 (Mechanical couplings)

Submitted by the expert from Poland *

The text reproduced below was prepared by the expert from Poland and proposes to insert into the Regulation an amendment imposing a new general constraint for granting component type-approval for mechanical coupling devices dedicated to category M₁ vehicles only if they are designed to tow trailers. The modifications to the current text of Regulation No. 55 are marked in bold characters.

* In accordance with the programme of work of the Inland Transport Committee for 2014–2018 (ECE/TRANS/240, para. 105 and ECE/TRANS/2014/26, programme activity 02.4), the World Forum will develop, harmonize and update Regulations in order to enhance the performance of vehicles. The present document is submitted in conformity with that mandate.

I. Proposal

Insert a new paragraph 8.2., to read:

"8.2. Prior to granting component approval for a type of mechanical coupling device dedicated to a certain type of category M₁ vehicle, the type-approval authority shall verify if that specific category M₁ vehicle type is designed to tow a trailer by verifying in the vehicle type approval documentation, if the maximum permissible static vertical load on the coupling ball is higher zero. If that value is zero, an approval shall be refused."

Paragraphs 8.2. to 8.5. (former), renumber as paragraphs 8.3. to 8.6.

II. Justification

1. During a recent European Union Type Approval Authorities Meeting (TAAM) held in Island in 2015, the expert from Poland raised a problem with UN type approval certificates granted for devices which were dedicated for a type of vehicles that should, however, never tow a trailer (for the excerpt of the TAAM meeting minutes, see the attached annex).

2. Thus, this document proposes to insert a new general constraint for granting component approvals for mechanical coupling devices only if the vehicle type concerned is designed to tow trailers.

Annex (in English only)

Icelandic Transport Authority	TAAM ICELAND 2015		
9.3. Regulation R55. Directive 94/20/EC . Mechanical coupling components of combinations of vehicles vs. framework directive 2007/46/EC.			
(Poland 1)			
Background:			
<p>There are M1 category small passenger cars that are not designed to tow a trailer (e.g. VW Up!, Škoda CityGo, Seat MII), so their respective Whole Vehicle Type-Approval (WVTA) certificates specify the permissible vertical load on a coupling device as zero. Then a coupling device manufacturer obtains an EC or UN type-approval certificate (sometimes - in another country) for a device that is dedicated for the above mentioned type of vehicle that should never tow a trailer.</p>			
<p>The Article 2 of the Directive 94/20/EC says:</p>			
Member States may not refuse:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — EEC type-approval or national type-approval for a vehicle, or refuse or prohibit the sale, registration, entry into service or use of a vehicle on grounds relating to its optional equipment with mechanical coupling devices, — EEC component type-approval or national component type-approval for a mechanical coupling, or prohibit the sale or use of a mechanical coupling device, 			
<p>Consequently, such a coupling device enters the after-market and is legally sold throughout the EU countries and then mounted to the vehicles it is dedicated for, thus breaching the conditions of granting of the WVTA. Such cases are often very difficult to be detected by the police or during the vehicle's periodical technical inspections (PTIs).</p>			
Question / Concern:			
<p>Prior granting a component type-approval certificate, is the Type-Approval Authority obliged to verify the possibility of legal usage of the coupling device against the WVTA certificate (e.g. in ETAES) and refuse the component type-approval if the WVTA does not permit ANY vertical load on a coupling device?</p>			
Proposed solutions:			
A	TAA is obliged to verify if the WVTA allows a vehicle to tow trailers and refuse to grant a component type-approval if the result of that verification is negative.		
B	There is no such an obligation.		
C	There are other reasons / circumstances, where such component type-approval should be granted (please specify).		
TAA code:	„e” 20 „E”		
Selection of solution		accepted	refused
A		X	
B			X
C			X
Majority is in favour of solution A but it was decided to forward this question to GRSG. Poland gets TAAM support to take this to GRSG. Move to next TAAM.			