

European Transport Safety Council
20 Avenue des Celtes
1040 Brussels
6 May 2025

Ursula von der Leyen-President of the European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels

Dear President Von der Leyen,

The importance of annual technical checks on older vehicles in reducing road deaths and injuries

We are writing to ask you to reaffirm your commitment to the Commission's recent proposal to update rules on periodic technical inspections of vehicles, following unjustified criticism by Friedrich Merz at the EPP congress in Valencia, which took place in your presence.¹

As you will be aware, the European Union is off track to meet its target to cut road deaths and serious injuries by half by 2030. Along with higher EU standards for new vehicles, legislation to ensure the roadworthiness of older vehicles is one of the few tools the Commission has to impact road safety directly.

Germany is in the minority of EU Member States that do not currently test cars and vans over ten years old every year.

As the Commission said when launching the proposal, most Member States already apply annual testing to cars and vans above ten years, some of them do it already after three or four years (in all EU Member States, heavy duty vehicles are tested annually from year one).

In the other 11 Member States, the introduction of annual testing of cars and vans would lead to a reduction in deaths and injuries. Almost 1850 lives saved and 21,400 severe and 120,500 slight injuries would be avoided over 25 years (or 74 deaths, 850 severe and 4,800 slight injuries avoided annually).

EU cars are now on average 12.3 years old. Greece and Estonia have the oldest car fleets, with vehicles around 17 years old. With older vehicles making up a larger part of the fleet, regular technical inspections take on an ever-greater importance for ensuring safety, as noted by a recent European Court of Auditors report on road safety.

In our view, cars, vans and motorcycles should be inspected annually from six years old at the latest.

On a related issue, we welcome the proposal to close the current loophole that has allowed a handful of EU Member States including Finland, Ireland and the Netherlands to exclude all motorcycles from regular testing requirements. Portugal has also recently announced its intention to cancel its planned introduction of tests for motorcycles. Such exemptions cannot be justified.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1083



However, we also believe that continuing to exclude motorcycles up to 125 cc from mandatory testing in the EU is a major missed opportunity to improve the safety of this category. Several studies show the severe consequences that can occur from technical defects on these vehicles, as well as the fact that widespread speed-related tampering on this category goes largely unchecked. We hope that you would support inclusion of light motorcycles in regular technical tests if such a proposal was supported by the European Parliament and/or the Council.

We look forward to offering advice and support to your colleagues as this proposal progresses through the legislative process, and hope we can count on your firm support for this important priority area for road safety.

Yours sincerely,

Antonio Avenoso

Executive Director

CC:

Apostolos Tzitzikostas – Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism
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