



*"...to uphold the freedom..."*

# PRESS RELEASE

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## EU ROADWORTHINESS TESTING

When the European Parliament Historic Vehicle Group (EPHVG) met in May, Szabolcs Schmidt the head of the EC Road Safety Unit, mentioned that proposals for revisions to the Roadworthiness Testing Directive, following a 2010 consultation, were expected 'in the summer'. In July, the European Commission published the detail which turned out to be a proposal to replace the current Roadworthiness Testing Directive (2009/40/EC) with a completely new Directive.

The draft of the new Directive has implications for all motorists, not just historic vehicle owners. Amongst other things, the draft includes requirements to test all trailers (which in turn implies a registration system) and requires tests to make reference to a vehicle's original 'technical characteristics'. The meaning of this expression is not defined. National governments are granted the right to make their own testing arrangements for 'vehicles of historic interest'. A vehicle of historic interest is then defined as one that

- Was manufactured more than 30 years ago
- Is maintained by use of replacement parts which reproduce the historic components of the vehicle
- Has not sustained any change in the technical characteristics of its main components such as engine, brakes, steering or suspension; and
- Has not been changed in its appearance.

FBHVC considers this definition to be unworkable and completely unacceptable. FBHVC also rejects the suggestion that Roadworthiness Testing should relate to a vehicle's 'technical characteristics', whatever the age of the vehicle. Modifications, alterations and improvements are all part of the history of motor vehicles and the older the vehicle, the more likely it is that it will have been altered at some stage. At present the basic tenet of a UK MoT test is that it is one of mechanical fitness. There is no database of original specifications for UK vehicles, so testing to original 'technical characteristics' is simply pie-in-the-sky.

Earlier this month, the Department for Transport asked stakeholders for comment on the proposals. FBHVC will be responding formally to this request when further analysis of the detailed proposals has been completed. FBHVC will be discussing the implications of the proposal with the international organisation, FIVA, and through them with the EPHVG group as well as with the All Party Parliamentary Historic Vehicle Group in the UK.

It should be remembered that this is still just a proposal. It has to have approval by each EU member country before it is adopted. Some media commentary on this topic has tended towards the 'we're doomed' end of the scale. It is certainly a serious issue and FBHVC is treating it accordingly.

## Notes for Editors

The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs works closely with a wide range of organisations and government departments to retain the freedom to use historic vehicles on the UK's roads. The FBHVC has over 530 organisations as members representing around 251,000 individual owners.

For further information contact the Federation office Tel: 01865 400845, or the legislation committee chairman, David Hurley, Tel: 01903 235192.

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