

Retreaded tyres: safer and more environmentally friendly

Consumer confidence in purchasing retreaded tyres will be enhanced by new standards for the retreading process and the final quality of such tyres. From now on all new retreaded tyres sold in the EU have to align with the requirements of UNECE Regulations (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe). These regulations introduce similar standards of safety and quality control for retreaded tyres as for new tyres. Retreaded tyres offer significant environmental advantages over new tyres.

Commissioner Verheugen responsible for enterprise and industry policy said: *"This is an elegant way of keeping EU legislation slim while regulating effectively on safety in the automotive sector. More such initiatives will follow."*

Each year Europe produces many millions of tyres which are used only for a few years and then are thrown away. Recycling of old tyres by retreading is a well known technique which permits tyres to be reused instead of being thrown away.

The Council Decision is the first one to make Regulations of the UNECE mandatory within the EU. Up to now, technical prescriptions of UNECE Regulations have only been recognised as alternatives to those contained in EU directives. By making UNECE Regulation 108 and 109 compulsory for retreaded car and commercial vehicle tyres respectively, the EU avoids the necessity to develop its own prescriptions for retreaded tyres, while at the same time ensuring that its tyre manufacturers can benefit from a wide market which extends far beyond the EU borders.

Retreading is a frequent practice, particularly for some of the heavier vehicle categories like trucks, buses and trailers. More than 50 % of these vehicles currently run with retreaded tyres on the streets of the EU.

Setting safety requirements will also enhance the use of retreaded tyres. This is beneficial to the environment since:

- - less raw materials are used;
- - less energy is necessary in the production process;
- - less tyre waste is generated.

For further information, please see:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/automotive/pagesbackground/tyres.htm>