



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
ENTERPRISE AND INDUSTRY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Consumer goods
Automotive industry

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Mr Lars K. Rodeblad,
President of the Swedish
Association of Vehicle Importers
Box 478
191 24 Sollentuna
Sweden

Dear Mr Rodeblad,

Vice-President Verheugen forwarded me your letter dated 14th October 2008 concerning the approval of vehicles imported from North America. As the technical legislation regarding the construction of vehicles falls under the remit of my Unit, he asked me to answer to you on his behalf.

It is true that the Commission's services are currently considering the possibility to lay down harmonised rules for the approval of individual vehicles imported from outside the European Union.

Several wide-scale press campaigns reported recently the bad results of crash tests that had been performed at the request of consumers associations on certain vehicles imported from third countries. A certain number amongst those vehicles were admitted into the European Union under individual vehicle approval schemes. As a consequence, the European Parliament and the Council took the view that Member States should not continue to be allowed to grant exemptions concerning important requirements for the protection of the occupants and protection of the environment.

At the request of the Member States and in accordance with Article 44 (1) of Framework Directive 2007/46/EC the Commission started consultations with the Member States about those issues with the final objective to propose an amendment to Directive 2007/46/EC in order to lay down harmonised technical requirements and administrative rules for individual vehicle approval. For such purposes, the Commission has set up a working party, in July 2008, of Governmental experts. It has considered several scenarios in line with the provisions of Article 24.

For the moment, the issue of vehicles imported from third countries and which are produced in high quantities for domestic markets is seen as most significant and should be given special attention.

Preliminary exchanges of view suggested that some chapters of the United States Code - Chapter 301 "Motor Vehicle Safety" - and certain articles of the Japan Safety Regulations

for Road Vehicles could be referred to as they seem to provide a level of road safety equivalent to the one provided under Community law.

At this stage, a few working papers have been circulated with a view to verifying whether a large consensus on a common approach could be found. A report and an informal proposal have been presented to the experts during the 4th Session of the TC-MV Committee on 18 December 2008. As soon as the documents have been refined, a draft proposal will be prepared by the Commission and be published on the web-site of the Automotive Industry Unit for public consultation.

Yours sincerely,



Philippe Jean
Head of Unit
PJT/NS