



Manual of European Environmental Policy

The following pages are a section from the Manual of European Environmental Policy written by the Institute for European Environmental Policy.

The Manual was published by Earthscan/Routledge from 2010 to 2012. It was designed as an on-line interactive reference work and annual printed versions were also produced.

This section is the text of the Manual as published in 2012. It is therefore important to note the following:

- The contents have not been updated since 2012 and no guarantee is given of the accuracy of the contents given potential subsequent developments.
- The sections include links to external websites (e.g. to legal texts). These links continue to work as long as those links are not broken by those websites.
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Motorcycles

Formal reference 97/24/EC (OJ L226 18.8.97) Proposed 30.11.93 – COM(93)449 2009/108/EC (OJ L 213 18.8.2009)	Parliament and Council Directive on certain components and characteristics of two- or three-wheel motor vehicles
Legal base	Article 114 TFEU (originally Article 100a EEC Treaty)
Binding dates Formal compliance Limits to take effect	18 December 1998 17 June 1999

Note: Directive 97/24/EC repealed Directive 78/1015/EEC and its amending Directives 87/56/EEC and 89/235/EEC.

Purpose of the Directive

Noise limits for motorcycles are set both for environmental reasons and to prevent national limits creating barriers to trade. Like other vehicle noise Directives (see the section on cars, buses, lorries and trains) the earlier Directives initially established optional limit values, but the ‘framework’ Directive 97/24/EC established mandatory limits.

Summary of the Directive

Before Directive 97/24/EC, EC legislation addressing motorcycle noise only set optional limits on the permissible noise levels. Directive 97/24/EC replaced Directive [78/1015/EEC](#) and its amendments by establishing equivalence between EC requirements and existing United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) standards for a range of non-environmental aspects of two- and three-wheeled vehicles. It also set out testing and type approval procedures and emission limits for noise. Table 1 sets out the limits, which now cover mopeds and tricycles as well as motorcycles. The Directive covers Electro-Magnetic Compatibility (EMC) for such vehicles and the separate technical units (STUs). The definition of an STU is different from that given in [Directive 95/54/EC](#) in that the component approval of an STU is for installation in any vehicle type or in a specific vehicle type or types. The emission and immunity requirements outlined in Directive 97/24/EC have the same reference levels as Directive 95/54/EC, as well as the same type approval and Conformity of Production (CoP) levels.

A provision is made for adapting Directive 97/24/EC to technical progress, Directive 2009/108/EC

is the latest adapted Directive.

Table 1. Noise limits set out in Directive 97/24/EC

<i>Vehicle type</i>	<i>db(A)</i>
Two-wheel mopeds	
Max. speed up to 25 km/h	66
Max. speed above 25 km/h	71
Three-wheel mopeds	76
Motorcycles	
Less than 80cc	75
80–175cc	77
Over 175cc	80
Tricycles	80

Development of the Directive

In January 1974 the French government notified the Commission that it intended to introduce national legislation on motorcycle noise and this led to a proposal for a Directive in 1975. It took over three years for the Directive to be agreed which suggests that there was some resistance from Member States.

Directive 78/1015/EEC set optional noise limits for motorcycles over 55 cubic capacity (cc) (mopeds, i.e. motorcycles under 55cc, were not covered by the Directive), which are set out in Table 2, as well as setting out the method by which the noise from motorcycles should be measured. Directive 87/56/EEC (OJ L24 27.1.87) amended 78/1015/EEC by reducing the number of types of motorcycles to three categories and set lower limits to be reached in two stages as shown in Table 3. Modifications to the test procedures were also introduced to make the conditions of testing more representative of road traffic conditions. Directive 89/235/EEC (OJ L98 11.4.89) banned the marketing and use of replacement silencers that did not closely match the noise emission limits laid down for original equipment (within 3 dB(A)). It also amended the Annexes of 78/1015/EEC relating to test procedures, EEC-type approval and associated certificates.

Directive 97/24/EC establishes mandatory standards for a wide range of criteria, environmental and otherwise, and extends the scope of the earlier Directives to cover mopeds and motorized tricycles.

Table 2. Noise limits set out in Directive 78/1015/EEC

<i>Cubic capacity (cc) of motorcycle</i>	<i>dB(A)</i>
Less than 80	78
80–125	80
125–350	83
350–500	85
Over 500	86

Table 3. Two-stage noise limits set out in Directive 87/56/EEC

Cubic capacity (cc)		<i>dB(A) and date for national-type approval</i>			
		First stage		Second stage	
Less than	80	77	1 October 1988	75	1 October 1993
	80–175	79	1 October 1989	77	31 December 1994
Over	175	82	1 October 1988	80	1 October 1993

Implementation of the Directive

Directive 97/24/EC has been transposed by all Member States. Information on Member States' transposition status can be found [here](#).

The Commission has not published any implementation report of Directive 97/24/EC.

Enforcement and court cases

The European Court of Justice has delivered only one judgement regarding Directive 97/24/EC.

- [C-83/00](#) The Commission brought an action against the Netherlands upon its failure to transpose Directive 97/24/EC within the prescribed time-limit. The Court ruled in 2001 that the Netherlands failed to comply with its obligations.

Related legislation

This Directive has a strong interaction with the legislation concerning noise emissions from cars, buses, lorries and trains and tractors:

- [Directive 70/157/EEC](#) on noise emissions from motor vehicles.
- [Directive 92/23/EEC](#) relating to tyres for motor vehicles and their trailers, and to their fitting.
- [Directive 74/151/EEC](#) stating standards for characteristics of wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors.