



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

European Blind Union response to the European Commission public consultation on the AVAS Pause Function Prohibition

January 2019

Concerned Act

Draft Delegated Regulation to amend Regulation (EU) No 540/2014 on the sound level of motor vehicles for the introduction of the requirements that prohibit the possibility to the vehicle driver to pause the Acoustic Vehicle Alerting System (AVAS), in accordance with UNECE Regulation No 138.01, already acceded in the EU legislation.

Feedback

EBU points out that AVAS is a crucial safety feature for electric and hybrid electric vehicles, as it allows blind and partially sighted persons as well as other vulnerable road users to notice such vehicles in time. It should not be possible for vehicle users to disengage their vehicle's safety features. This argument has been acknowledged by the UNECE in its Regulation No 138.01 and it is time for the EU to follow suit. Already today, the provisions of UNECE Regulation 138.01, which apply as of now, are acceded in EU legislation. Vehicle manufacturers can and do voluntarily follow the UNECE provisions.

EBU therefore welcomes the proposal by the European Commission to align the provisions of Regulation (EU) No 540/2014 with UNECE Regulation No 138.01, already acceded in the EU legislation.

Particularly, we approve of the decision by the European Commission to prohibit the AVAS Pause Function, as already stipulated in paragraph 6.2.6 of UNECE Regulation No 138.01.

The Commission rightly notes in Recital 5 of the proposed Delegated Regulation that the application of UNECE Regulation No 138.01 is a “matter of urgency”. However, EBU is concerned about the extended transition period for the pause function prohibition as proposed in the current draft of the Delegated Regulation, which contrasts with this perception of urgency.

EBU understands the concerns of the Commission that manufacturers can currently choose to build in a pause switch and might need time ahead for developing and approving an electric vehicle without pause switch. Nevertheless, we would find it preferable that the implementation deadlines for the pause function prohibition be aligned with the implementation deadlines for the overall operation conditions as specified in Section I.2 of the proposed Annex.

We therefore ask the Commission to review which manufacturers effectively have vehicle types approved with an AVAS pause switch at the date of 1st July 2019.

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