EU plans to restrict repairs on older vehicles...

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Author:

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Under new EU proposals car owners may no longer be able to repair older vehicles such as this 'Zafira A', no matter how good its overall condition...

Robin Roberts (WheelsWithinWales) writes... With the internal

combustion engine to be consigned to history in the not-too-distant future, recent information has emerged regarding the European Union's plan to restrict repairs on older vehicles, reports EuroWeekly.

The proposal, originating from the European Commission and yet to be ratified, aims to phase out older, more polluting vehicles in favour of environmentally friendly options. This prospective regulation, awaiting approval from the European Parliament and the Council, introduces the notion of a 'residual vehicle'.

Cars experiencing failures in major components such as engines, transmissions, brakes, or steering, and deemed old (potentially around 15 years), will fall under this category. Once labelled as residual, these vehicles would be barred from undergoing significant repairs and would likely be scrapped.

The EU's ambitious 'Fit for 55' program seeks to eliminate direct transport emissions by 2050, with interim goals including a 55 per cent reduction by 2030 from 1990 levels. A significant step in this journey is the 2035 ban on new combustion engine cars, excluding vehicles operating on potential future synthetic fuels. However, the reality presents challenges, as the uptake of low or zero-emission vehicles in the EU lags behind expectations, varying significantly across member states.

Spain, for example, now has an average vehicle age exceeding 14 years, with over 47 per cent of vehicles older than 15 years.
Such trends are not confined to southern European countries or those with lower incomes; Germany's average vehicle age hovers around 10 years, with France exceeding this mark.

This ageing fleet has prompted the European Commission to propose measures aimed at reducing car longevity.

The crux of the controversy lies in a draft regulation redefining waste classification and management for end-of-life vehicles, promoting a circular economy.

The European Commission's office in Spain has clarified that the proposal does not intend to prevent necessary engine repairs or replacements in standard cars.

The regulation specifies conditions under which a vehicle is deemed technically irreparable or residual. These include extensive damage, such as being cut, welded, burnt, submerged, or exhibiting irreversible technical defects.

Controversially, a vehicle requiring major part replacements or whose repair costs exceed its market value could also be classified as residual.
This raises concerns about the potential impact on the workshop sector and the preservation of classic cars. The proposal, while not forcing owners to discard their vehicles, casts doubt on the future of vehicle repairs and sales, especially for cars potentially deemed historical.

In conclusion, the EU's new car regulation proposal, part of its broader environmental strategy, is a multifaceted issue.
It seeks to promote a cleaner future but raises questions about its implications for vehicle owners, the automotive industry, and the preservation of automotive heritage.

Wheels-Alive comments: "The thin end of the wedge… Another nonsensical proposal that, if ratified, would see perfectly viable vehicles (including classic cars) consigned to the scrapyard, despite the fact that the CO2 emissions produced in running the vehicle (even on fossil fuels) would be at a far lower level overall than those arising from building a new car – whether powered by an internal combustion engine or electricity – to replace it!

In addition, as we have mentioned before, carbon-neutral synthetic/e-fuels are already available (but seemingly ignored by the powers that be in the U.K. and elsewhere) which could be used as 'drop-in' fuels to help keep such older vehicles running and assist in reaching 'net zero' more rapidly…"