

New ECE-regulations for accessory and replacement equipments

Transmitted by the expert from Germany

In Germany every year more than 100,000 seat covers as after market accessory and replacement equipments are being sold for front and rear seats of passenger cars. These equipments are sold by both the vehicle manufacturers and the after market suppliers. Since the introduction of the side airbag, some accessory manufacturers have developed special seat covers, which are qualified for seats with integrated side airbag e.g. in the seat or in the backrest outside, and which do not impair the function of the airbag.

The German approval authority (KBA) is granting national type approvals for those accessory parts according to national requirements since 1998. But some after market manufacturers are selling seat covers and seat re-equipments, which do not take into account the function of the airbag or do not prove the proper function of the seat cover. In this case the protection of the airbag cannot be effective, or even the uncontrolled deployment of the airbag still increases injury risk for the passenger. The driver often is not conscious of this problem.

A similar problem exists with regard to the **replacement seats** offered in the after market. Also in this case products are on the market, which do not meet the safety requirements for original seats, e.g. regarding the resistance against the load of luggage in the case of a frontal impact.

In order to facilitate the access of the manufacturers of high quality accessory products to the international market without barriers to trade, we suggest, as a first step, the development of a new ECE-regulation on replacement seats. As an alternative, a new Annex containing replacement seats could be added to Regulation No. 17 on seats and their anchorages.

This item was already discussed in WP.29/AC.2 in March 2005 and was delegated to GRSP for further consideration.

If GRSP agrees to this proposal, Germany would be ready to prepare the corresponding draft Regulations resp. amendments and submit them to GRSP for discussion.
