

Reflections of the Netherlands upon European policy for Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs)

The Netherlands welcomes the focus of the European Commission on the safety of Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs), as highlighted in the TRL report on road safety for PMDs. The Netherlands strongly advocates for a **harmonised regulatory environment** for PMDs¹. A **harmonised regulatory environment** can ensure technically safe and uniform vehicles. It can facilitate the rapid development of this type of vehicle and its market, remove barriers to innovation, and create better conditions for companies to scale and attract investment. To ensure the safety and quality of PMDs, this policy framework should include an **EU-wide type approval system**. A European framework for PMDs should prioritize two pillars: Establishing a **harmonised regulatory environment** and level playing field; and ensuring safe and good quality PMDs by introducing a European **type-approval system** for these vehicles.²

1. Establishing a harmonized regulatory environment and level playing field

A **harmonised regulatory environment** within the European market is a key aspect for fostering the growth of PMD manufacturers whilst ensuring technically safe vehicles. Harmonised standards between Member States (MS) will facilitate market access for manufacturers and the growing demand for decarbonisation solutions, enabling Europe to lead in both safe and sustainable mobility. It opens up market potential for young innovative companies and established industry players. A **pan-European regulatory framework** will provide a solid foundation for a strong PMD industry across the EU.

In the current situation, PMDs fall outside the scope of Regulation (EU) 168/2013. This results in MS creating their own legal framework for PMDs. Subsequently, manufacturers need to comply with a patchwork of inconsistent national rules between different MS. This leads to barriers within the European Single Market. As a result, both MS and manufacturers must invest time, money and resources to deal with the lack of European harmonisation. Regulatory inconsistencies also create unnecessary complexity for manufacturers and undermine the structural integrity of exempted vehicles, as similar vehicles do not need to comply to the same set of standards. For example, e-steps without a saddle are exempted from Regulation (EU) 168/2013, whilst e-steps with a saddle *are* covered by the regulation. Such regulatory inconsistencies create unnecessary complexity for manufacturers and undermine the structural integrity of exempted vehicles, as very similar vehicles do not need to comply to the same set of standards.

2. Ensuring the safe, good quality PMDs by introducing a European type-approval-like system for these vehicles

Over the past few years, the Netherlands has led with the 'regulatory' example, developing the Dutch framework for Light Electric Vehicles (LEV)³. In the Dutch context, a LEV refers to what is known internationally as a PMD, although the definition of LEV is somewhat broader and includes for example cargo bikes⁴. The Dutch framework purposefully requires a full type-approval to ensure the technical qualities of the vehicles and to guarantee the quality of the production process.

However, recognising that the market has matured in recent years and that a full type-approval would be burdensome for some, the Netherlands argues that a **European type-approval-like system** could also ensure technically safe and uniform vehicles. **Type-approval-like procedures** could facilitate the effective prevention of unsafe vehicles on the European market. This type-approval-like system could ensure that PMDs can enter the European market safely, providing legal certainty and reliability for both manufacturers and MS, while limiting the administrative burden. In support of this, the recent TRL report highlights that European technical regulation for PMDs would have a positive impact on both trade and safety.

The Netherlands calls on the European Commission to address the challenges posed by fragmented regulation and to commit to road safety for PMDs and equal market access for manufacturers. The Netherlands therefore calls for the creation of a harmonised European regulatory environment with type-approval-like procedures. The time is ripe for a harmonised policy that ensures the accessibility of LEVs and safety of its users across Europe.

¹Personal mobility devices (PMDs) do not yet have a legal definition, but for the purposes of this study we have included any lightweight machine for carrying people or goods that is wholly or partially propelled by an electric motor and is currently excluded from the scope of Regulation (EU) No 168/2013. We have also included pedal cycles with electrical assistance which fall within the scope of sub-categories L1e-A and L1e-B. (TRL, 2024)

²The specifics of this type-approval process are conceptual and may change. As a starting point, the TLR report (Chapter 9.3. 'Conformity assessment') on the subject of *gradual approval scheme* offers an initial perspective. The system recommended by TLR is seen as *one* of the options.

³[The Netherlands and Light Electric Vehicles \(LEVs\)](#) | Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Watermanagement, 2022

⁴The terms PMD and LEV are often mistakenly used interchangeably, but one should be aware that there are **not** synonyms. In general, the definition of PMDs refers to vehicles that are even lighter than LEVs (< 45 kg) and designed for single occupant use.