

Re: historic vehicles in The Netherlands

Dear Mr. Weekers

The Fédération des Véhicules Anciens (FIVA) represents the interests of around 1,5 million historic vehicle owners all over the world.

FIVA is a federation of national organizations, like FEHAC in The Netherlands, who all have the same mission as FIVA: to ensure that legislation does not unintentionally or unnecessarily impact upon the preservation and use of historic vehicles, which are owned by enthusiasts and preserved in historically correct condition.

The Netherlands always have been a pioneer in terms of legislation that very much respected the special position of historic vehicles, as a category of vehicles that should be treated differently than the vehicles that are used for daily transport purposes.

In recent months however, FIVA received signals from both FEHAC and from international press publications about developments in The Netherlands, that seem to jeopardize the carefully built up special status of historic vehicles.

For FIVA this is reason to stress the importance of the continuation of the principle that historic vehicles in some case deserve a legal regime that is different from the one that applies to other vehicles.

The Netherlands were one of the first Countries in Europe where an exemption for annual road taxation was put in place. Many countries have followed this example, in recognition of the fact that historic vehicles are used rarely, and that it is worthwhile to preserve them, as a part of our technical and cultural heritage. If the exemption were to be abolished, we fear that other countries will be tempted to do the same. The effect of such measure of course would be different per country, dependent of the tax burden. A survey carried out by FIVA a couple of years ago showed that the average annual road taxes in the Netherlands exceed those of other countries considerably. Adding to this that numerous owners have more than one historic vehicle, we only can support the efforts of FEHAC to find a reasonable solution, in the interest of all parties involved, including the many specialized businesses that are serving the historic vehicle owners, and the hundreds of clubs organizing tours and events.

Because various national and international research studies give evidence that the historic vehicle movement generates annually billions of Euros. And the clubs undoubtedly contribute to the social cohesion our society is in need of.

We are fully aware of the problems Dutch government is faced with, both in the budgetary as in the environmental field. But we are convinced that harsh

measures, like abolishing the tax exemption or banning historic vehicles from environmental zones, only will cause that all parties will lose.

What is needed is a balanced regime: enabling historic vehicle owners to continue going to events and doing some recreational driving in rural areas, not causing any harm to the environment.

FIVA is happy to contribute to such solution, based on FIVA's definition of an historic vehicle:

A mechanically propelled road vehicle

- which is at least 30 years old
- which is preserved and maintained in a historically correct condition
- which is not used as means of daily transport
- and which is therefore part of our technical and cultural heritage

The introduction of FIVA's age criterion (at least 30 years old) in our view would be a good start for the further development of a historic vehicle regime in The Netherlands, that would recognize the value of historic vehicles for economy, society and last but not least our heritage.

We trust that a constructive solution will be found, in the spirit of what FIVA and FEHAC proudly represent.

Yours faithfully,

Horst Brüning
President of FIVA