

CEPE Vehicle Refinish Sector

10 years of the Directive 2004/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the limitation of emissions of volatile organic compounds due to the use of organic solvents in decorative paints and varnishes and vehicle refinishing products and amending Directive 1999/13/EC

In April 2004, ten years ago, the directive 2004/42/EC on the limitation of emissions of volatile organic compounds due to the use of organic solvents in decorative paints and varnishes and vehicle refinishing products, called as well “Decopaint Directive” came into force.

As a complementary measure in order to ensure compliance with the ceiling for emissions of VOCs since 2004 this product directive significantly affects the market for vehicle refinish paint in the EU.

While until then the VOC Directive (1999/13/EC) focused on the VOC emissions of installations, this directive is addressed to the manufacturers and distributors of vehicle refinishing products. With the basic idea of "solvents that are not placed on the market can not cause emissions". Particularly emissions in applications and installations that so far were covered inadequately by the VOC Directive 1999/13/EC, should become appropriately limited.

The VOC-product Directive 2004/42/EC, which specifies maximum VOC levels for certain products or product groups, caused manufacturers and users of vehicle refinishing products to consistently focus on the development and the use of VOC-compliant coatings systems. The use of these products enables to accomplish reduction of VOC emissions for this kind of installations similar to technical and organizational measures in industrial facilities according to the VOC Directive 1999/13/EC.

Thus the use of waterborne and high-solid paint systems has become established in the meantime. For example the share of waterborne basecoat increased between 2005 and 2012 by eight times. The proportion of HS topcoats increased in the same period by more than ten times in the total consumption of vehicle refinishing paint in the EU market.

The Directive 2004/42/EC has been adopted in all EU countries in the relevant national regulations and will continue also along with the European Industrial Emissions Directive (2010/75/EU), which implementation is going to be completed and, among other regulations, will take up the VOC Emissions Directive 1999/13/EC.

Last but not least, the EU Commission has stated in its final report of 2011 on the implementation and review of Directive 2004/42/EC that, based on feedback from the Member States, it can be seen that monitoring systems to ensure compliance are in place. Adjustments in the scope or of limit values of the Paints Directive are not justified at this time.

Over the past 10 years the European Paint Association CEPE has contributed to the successful implementation of the Directive and supported the paint manufacturer with various guidelines in the compliant implementation of the Directive.

October 2004, revised in October 2011:

“Guideline on labelling (Article 4) Vehicle refinishing products”

June 2006:

“Guideline „Classification of Vehicle Refinishing Coatings into Categories for the Directive 2004/42/EC”

August 2007, revised in 2014:

“Guideline for VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) Determination of Vehicle Refinishing Products”

April 2009, revised in 2014:

“Q&A dealing with Scratch Resistant Clear Coat”

Although it is not expected at this time that the VOC-product Directive for vehicle refinishing products will become subject of further revision, compliance and the general aspect of reducing of VOC emissions is consistently supported and implemented for the development and marketing of those products by manufacturers and distributors. Even with regard to the further targets for reduction of VOC emissions that were formulated in the context of the Gothenburg Protocol to be accomplished for 2020, it remains important for the vehicle refinishing market to demonstrate presence in this area.

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