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Picture:



Country:

Netherlands

Topic:

Clean and energy-efficient vehicles
Urban Vehicle Access Regulations

Body:

Municipalities in The Netherlands are to apply harmonised rules for their Low Emission Zone's

(LEZ's). From 1 January 2020, national regulation applies to LEZ's, putting an end to the increasing variety in local rules for each individual LEZ. The harmonised rules allow municipalities to instate a LEZ in order to improve air quality while providing motorists with clarification of the access regulations and enforcement that apply to local LEZ's.

Lack of harmonisation

Until recently, there was no national policy on LEZ's, so that in the thirteen cities where an LEZ is already in force, different rules apply to diesel passenger and delivery vans. Several other municipalities are considering the introduction LEZ, each with their own set of rules, enforcement and even road signs to designate the LEZ. State Secretary Stientje van Veldhoven puts an end to the growth of a wide diversity of municipal plans for such zones. From January 2020, Dutch cities can choose from two types of environmental zones.

New regulations

The new regulations have been formulated in consultation with stakeholders, including municipalities, vehicle operators and automotive sector.

From the beginning of the year, all municipalities will apply the European emissions standard, which rate vehicles based on the level of their emissions, as a basis for their LEZ. Two types of LEZ have been defined based on these emissions standards: "Yellow zones" apply to diesel passenger cars and vans and only provide access to the LEZ for vehicles with an emissions standard of 3 (Euro 3, vehicles first registered after 2000) or higher. "Green zones" apply to diesel-powered trucks and coaches and are accessible for vehicles with an emissions standard of 4 or higher (Euro 4, vehicles first registered after 2005). In 2025, the access regulations will be adjusted one level upwards.

Vehicles using a fuel other than diesel are allowed in all low-emission zones.

Mandate with municipalities

Municipalities can choose whether to instate a yellow or a green zone, or both. In addition, from 2022 onwards municipalities can also instate a "purple zone" for trucks, only allowing access to trucks complying with Euro 6 standards.

Municipalities that already have a LEZ in place are allowed a transition period until 29 October 2020, in which vehicles can be subject to the old rules in addition to the green and yellow zones.

Van Veldhoven states the decision to introduce an LEZ and the type of LEZ is for municipalities to make. Van Veldhoven: 'The effectiveness of LEZ on the improvement of air quality depends on the traffic situation on site. When deciding on a LEZ, municipalities should assess its effectiveness and proportionality and weighs the consequences for residents and road users. Municipalities should also compare the instrument of LEZ against other measures that can improve air quality.'

Enforcement and foreign vehicles

Road signs mark the boundaries of the LEZ and show which vehicles are affected. The current road signs will be replaced by a harmonised version. Vehicles entering a LEZ do not have to register in advance.

Enforcement of the access regulation is the responsibility of the municipalities, which can use a combination of cameras with electronic licence plate recognition and special investigating officers to check compliance with the LEZ regulation.

The vehicle data obtained is cross-checked with the national vehicle registration database to obtain the information of the year of first registration and emission standard.

This does pose a problem for the enforcement of restrictions on foreign vehicles. While The Netherlands and neighbouring Belgium have made bilateral agreements on the exchange of vehicle registration data for this purpose, various other EU countries have not been willing to share this data. The government will continue to negotiate bilateral agreements with other EU countries, while it is also committed to finding solutions in a broader EU context.

More information:

Urban Access Regulations in Europe website <https://urbanaccessregulations.eu/>

Low-Emission Zones in the Netherlands website [Milieuzones in Nederland](#) (in Dutch)

Source:

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2019/04/12/voorhang-wijziging-reglement-verkeersregels-en-verkeerstekens-1990-in-verband-met-de-harmonisatie-van-milieuzones>

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