

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002316/26**  
**to the Commission**  
**Barry Cowen (Renew)**  
(4 June 2026)

*Subject:* Vehicle type approval divergence and the Northern Ireland vehicle market

Recent regulatory divergence between EU and Great Britain (GB) vehicle type approval regimes risks creating barriers for the automotive market in Northern Ireland. Since the end of 2025, vehicles placed on the GB market have required GB national type approval, while Northern Ireland continues to apply EU type approval rules under the Windsor Framework. Industry representatives warn that this divergence could reduce vehicle choice, increase costs and distort competition between retailers in Northern Ireland and Great Britain. The sector supports approximately 17 600 jobs and brings GDP 3 billion in annual revenues to Northern Ireland.

In the light of these concerns:

1. What assessment has the Commission made of the impact of the divergence between EU and GB vehicle type approval regimes on the availability and affordability of vehicles in Northern Ireland, and on profitability and investment in the sector?
2. Has the Commission examined whether the Windsor Framework could allow vehicles approved under the GB national type approval regime to be registered in Northern Ireland while maintaining the integrity of the single market?
3. What engagement has the Commission had with representatives of the Northern Ireland motor industry on this issue, and does it intend to explore solutions to ensure consumer choice and fair competition?

Submitted: 4.6.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission**  
(7 August 2026)

1. Under the Windsor Framework, the UK Government is responsible for implementing the limited set of EU rules that apply in Northern Ireland. It is therefore for the UK Government to assess whether there is any divergence between EU and Great Britain vehicle type approval regimes impacting the availability and affordability of vehicles in Northern Ireland. That said, the latest updates in the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement Automotive Working Group show a strong degree of alignment between EU and Great Britain vehicle type approval regimes.

2. In accordance with the Windsor Framework, vehicles can be registered in Northern Ireland if they are EU or UK(NI) type approved <sup>(1)</sup>. Vehicles approved only in Great Britain cannot therefore be registered in Northern Ireland <sup>(2)</sup>. This is required to continue to ensure Northern Ireland's unique access to the EU Single Market, the protection of the EU Single Market and the avoidance of a hard border on the island of Ireland.

3. The Commission engages extensively with Northern Ireland stakeholders. On the specific matter of vehicle type approval, clarifications to concerns raised by Northern Ireland businesses were also brought jointly by the EU and the UK in their regular engagement with Northern Ireland stakeholders in the margins of the Specialised Committee on the Windsor Framework.

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<sup>(1)</sup> UK(NI) type approval is subject to the same rules as in the EU, with UK authorities involved in the assessment process.

<sup>(2)</sup> Vehicles in Northern Ireland may however have a dual EU and Great Britain type approval.