



## INTERNATIONAL MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION COMMITTEE

### The Evolution of Vehicle Inspections in Portugal

Dear Ladies, dear Sirs,

ANCIA is an association which exists in the sector of vehicle inspections since 1995, and from this date onwards, has been defending and promoting the sector of inspections in Portugal.

ANCIA is a member of CITA and, in the aftermath of the interest and concern shared in the scope of vehicle technical inspections and road safety, was invited to host and organize in our country this international conference. This kind invitation from CITA was seen, since the beginning, with the primary purpose of providing an environment which enables discussion, sharing of experiences and knowledge. ANCIA has honourably accepted the invitation and here we all are in Porto for another international conference about inspections.

The organization of this international event was a challenge for ANCIA. An ambitious and necessary challenge, because it generates complementarities and synergies between all of those who intervene and act in this sector.

In truth, an activity such as vehicle technical inspections and its contribution in the prevention of road safety, appeals to the participation of all involved entities; appeals to a permanent knowledge update.

CITA conferences are a great example of knowledge update, sharing of experiences and know-how, enabling an enriching discussion environment not only because of the approached themes but also because of the high standard of its speakers. ANCIA, while member of CITA, has benefited a lot from its involvement and knowledge acquired while being an associate member of this international organization. This knowledge has been quite advantageous and has reinforced the will and endeavour of the authorized entities to undertake inspections in Portugal to be kept updated and technologically advanced.

I can assure you that inspection centres in Portugal already count on a quite advanced experience and technical knowledge, which allows us to accomplish this activity with high quality and unmatched strictness. The authorized entities to undertake inspections in Portugal perform this task with a special mission spirit, pride and responsibility. It is an activity of national importance, focusing its importance on prevention and road safety, in the environmental impact and also in the increased responsibility of undertaking an activity which is the Portuguese government's original competency, who trusted and bet on private entities to undertake this crucial and important task in the Portuguese society.

#### **Consultative Status Category II to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations**

It was surely a safe but successful bet. We are aware of the important role of inspection centres in road safety and in reducing the number of casualties in our roads and therefore our increased endeavour in undertaking this activity, our strictness, our ability, our high technical quality and sense of public service. Vehicle technical inspections in Portugal are very successful. A success that belongs to all. A success which ANCIA shares and, unpretentiously, also understands as its own, because of its contribute and involvement while being an association which is representative of this sector.

But the success of vehicle technical inspections belongs, as I stated before, to all, road safety concerns us all. Thus, our strictness while performing this activity and the continuous sensitization work developed in close contact with drivers so as to sensitize them for the inspection, once they are – the drivers – the ones most interested in the technical verification of their vehicles.

Actually, a driver who goes to a centre to have his vehicle tested, makes inspections centres a privileged means to, because of the closeness with drivers, promote technical inspections and sensitize them towards road safety. We have an essential role in road safety. We are aware of this fact.

So, I hereby, publicly, leave a righteous and duly word for the public entity that tutelages inspection in Portugal, nowadays, the Institute for the Mobility and Terrestrial Transports, which regulates and supervises this activity and shares the same interests and concerns in the scope of road safety, defending, uncompromisingly, a safer road environment for all users.

I should point out that, in Portugal, the sector of technical inspections has stabilized. The around 171 inspection centres operating in our country, bearing in mind the number and the geographic distribution fill in the user's needs and adequately perform this activity. I should, publicly, point out the work and effort made by Portugal towards being able to keep the sector stable. Stability that is something essential in this sector, and which ANCIA defends as crucial for such an important area for our country. I should tell you that the fact that the number of authorized entities undertaking this activity in Portugal hasn't suffered any significant changes, because it is believed to be enough to accommodate the users' needs, has been a stabilizing element in the sector. This stability has been good for everybody and has caused a significant evolution in the sector of vehicle technical inspections.

An evolution concerning procedures, requirements, quality and technical equipping of inspection centres. The authorized entities undertaking these activities in Portugal have wagered and invested in a philosophy of permanently updating knowledge and technology. We know, and we are aware, of the strictness and constant evolution of the vehicle sector and of the importance of permanently updating. We know we can't stop, we should keep going and evolve.

In Portugal, inspection centres are attentive to this vehicle sector dynamic and permanently develop efforts towards modernization, acquiring new equipments and betting on training their inspectors so as to meet the sector's demands. To meet the quality challenges, competitiveness, technological innovation, and also as a factor of evolution and struggle towards technical inadequacy.

I can assure that, nowadays, according to the quality of inspection centres in Portugal and the acquired experience over the last years, it is possible to deal with situations of increasing technical complexity, which didn't happen in the past. I should point out that the recognized effort of the competent public entities in this matter, strictness, professionalism and investments made by the authorized entities to undertake inspections in our country, have largely contributed for the fact that the inspections system, as far as quality and rigour are concerned, hasn't stagnated, but, on the contrary, is in constant evolution. Portugal, over the last years, has evolved and has broadened the scope of the centres activities. Apart from periodic mandatory technical inspections and optional inspections, both inspections to assign a new plate and extraordinary inspections were implemented.

I can surely say that Portugal was a pioneer in the implementation of extraordinary inspections and in the creation of B category inspection centres that also fulfils a fundamental role in the inspections sector, and, consequently, in road safety.

The B category inspection centres are places where, apart from making periodic mandatory inspections, it is also possible to make extraordinary inspections with the goal of verifying the vehicle's safety conditions in the aftermath of changes in its constructive or functional features, or other causes, namely in case of damage because of an accident. It was another meaningful advance in both road safety and prevention.

As far as quality is concerned, I should say that all centres in Portugal have been certified. Portugal is, therefore, one of the few countries where inspection centres are subject to compulsory accreditation by the Quality System. The number of inspections made in Portugal has been increasing in a moderate and sustainable way, in the year 2007 over five million inspections were made in Portugal, and more than one million vehicles failed.

To sum up, all conditions are created to, without questioning the stability of the inspections sector in Portugal, evolve towards enlarging the activity of technical inspections to all motor vehicles and their trailers that circulate in public roads and are not yet subject to periodic inspections.

Dear Ladies, dear Sirs,

It is unquestionable the contribution of technical inspections in road prevention and safety, it is unquestionable the contribution of inspections in road quality, it is unquestionable the contribution of inspections in reducing road accidents.

It is known that because of technical inspections the maintenance and conservation of vehicles becomes easier, which contributes to the increase of active and passive safety, as far as a previous detection and correction of defects found in vehicles is carried out, contributing, in this way, to a reduction in serious malfunctions and in the probability of mechanic failures to occur, which are sometimes the reason for accidents.

As it is easily noticeable, the fact that it is compulsory for all vehicles to circulate within all technical requirements foreseen in the law is decisive for the necessary reduction of accidents and undoubtedly contributes for the maintenance and betterment of an increasingly safer road environment.

It is our understanding, and we are certainly in agreement with IMTT, the entity that tutelages the activity of inspections in Portugal, that all vehicles circulating in public roads should be subject to a periodic inspection to analyse their technical and mechanic condition as well as their environmental impact.

This is the path to follow, and this CITA Conference is the right place and moment to prepare ourselves for new challenges.

Thank you very much.

Fernando Teixeira

President of the Board of ANCIA