

# RV market confirms the excellence of Ducato's automatic transmission



The new automatic transmission of the Ducato complements the modern RV concept that includes top-notch driving comfort. With its nine speeds, smooth gear shifts and high peak torque, the new automatic transmission is an important evolution of the Ducato that is "born to be a motorhome"

*Words Renato Antonini*

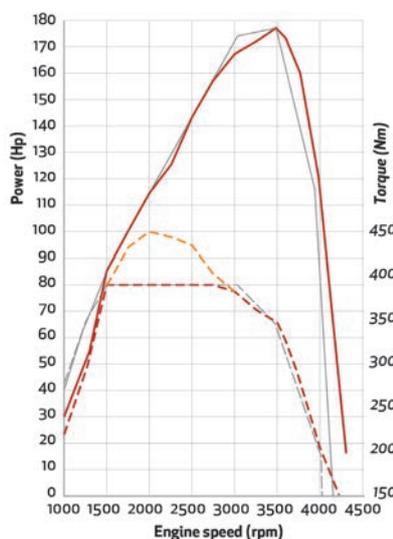
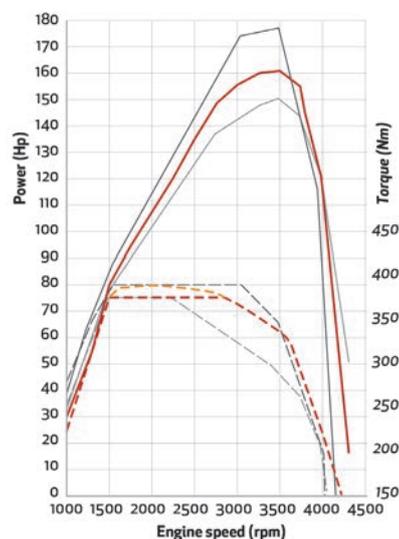
**F**or better performance and more comfort, the Ducato can now fit a next-generation automatic transmission that was launched on the market in 2019 when the range was refreshed.

*"The market response exceeded expectations,"* said Roberto Cusano, Converter Manager of Fiat Professional. *"The technical innovation was warmly welcomed by the RV world. Nearly one vehicle in two now fits an automatic transmission. These are remarkably high numbers that testify to our good work. In recent months, end-users have had the opportunity to put the new automatic transmission to the test in various situations*



## The advantages of automatic

- **Nine gears:** smooth shifting, better driving comfort
  - Optimum torque use, **agile and safe driving** in all conditions
- **Optimised engine speed management** up to 20% reduction on motorways compared to manual (160 and 180 hp)
  - **Reliability and durability** with torque converter and electronic management
  - **Optimised fuel consumption management**



Torque and Power: — Euro 6d-TEMP engine; — Euro 6B engine; — With automatic gearbox

and have particularly enjoyed the driving pleasure it offers”.

The 2019 version of the Ducato was a leap forward compared to the past. The most popular mechanical base for motorhomes has more car feel than ever. Since last year, the Ducato was equipped with a six-speed automatic robotised gearbox, while the more sophisticated nine-speed automatic gearbox offered today comes with a next-generation hydraulic torque converter capable of delivering smoother shifts in various driving situations. It is offered as an option on three of the four engine versions in the line-up, specifically the 140 hp, the 160 hp and the 180 hp.

### High torque

“The management of gear shifts and power delivery is profoundly different from the way the previous robotised gearbox worked”, explained Roberto Cusano. “The new transmission works with hydraulic and electronic systems and is combined with an engine with a variable geometry turbine. All this guarantees better torque output, already at low rpms. Let’s not forget that it is not only the peak torque that counts, but that the driveline is equally important to achieve maximum values. The new Ducato with automatic transmission offers greater fluidity in torque delivery, more flexibility, and this also means greater safety, for instance, while overtaking”.

The advantage of having high torque available already at low rpms is obviously important for motorhomes because they are often very heavy. It is interesting to note that on the 160 hp and 180 hp versions of the Ducato, the automatic transmission allows an improvement in torque compared to the manual transmission of up to 12.5% more. With the manual gearbox, the torque curve stabilises at 1,500 rpm, while with the automatic transmission it can still grow. The torque of the 160 hp engine peaks at 400 Nm (against 380 Nm of the manual gearbox), while the 180 hp engine reaches a peak of 450 Nm (with the manual gearbox it stops at 400 Nm). With the automatic transmission, the performance of the vehicle is always efficiently managed by the on-board electronics.

### Low costs

Real fuel-efficiency jumps to the eye when

comparing the new nine-speed automatic transmission with the older automatic robotised transmission. Interestingly, better fuel-efficiency can also be seen compared with the current manual gearbox. This is because the control module of the latter is calibrated to obtain the best possible trade-off between consumption and performance. The automatic transmission, on the other hand, can count on the Eco driving mode that reshapes the control module to the advantage of fuel-efficiency that is especially useful on long motorway journeys.

In addition, the automatic transmission is always combined with the Stop&Start system, which stops the engine when standing. The 120 hp and 140 hp versions with manual gearbox do not have Stop&Start as standard. Fuel-efficiency and the Stop&Start system also spell a reduction of CO2 emissions to the benefits of the environment. We must also consider that the new transmission, with



hydraulic and electronic management, needs less frequent maintenance.

“An automatic transmission like this is more durable than a manual one because there is a lower incidence of the human factor”, added Roberto Cusano. “The high-tech electronic management optimises system operation. Ultimately, the higher initial cost of the automatic transmission can be greatly reduced if you consider the saving in the years after purchase”.

### More comfort

Since 2006, Ducato has been working to provide bold answers to the needs of the motorhome world and the request for an automatic transmission was one of them. With the 2019 version of the Ducato, they decided to aim high, offering end customers a high-tech automatic transmission, which at the same time has become an important sales tool for manufacturers and dealers.

“The possible combination with three different engines leaves the end customer ample freedom of choice and allows motorhome manufacturers to differentiate their ranges more”, said Roberto Cusano. “The new transmission is Fiat’s answer not only for the top of the range but also for mid-market manufacturers. The consumer’s tastes are changing, like the car world. Automatic transmissions are being more and more appreciated, so many users who have an automatic on their car and they want one on their motorhome as well. For the new generation of users, driving comfort is a fact and Ducato offers a convincing solution in every respect”.

## Three driving modes

The new transmission can operate either in fully automatic mode or with driver intervention in Autostick mode.

Three different driving modes can be set in automatic mode: Normal, Power and Eco. The on-board electronics provide the best driving conditions according to speed, load and slope of the route, with a different power output. At launch, the transmission is always set to Normal, for standard driving, which offers the right amount of power and perfect driving pleasure on the various routes. Power mode can be used if you need to deal with complex situations, such as steep climbs. Eco mode allows enjoyable and relaxing trips while saving fuel. It is perfect for long and flat stretches on motorways at cruising speed. The Autostick function, on the other hand, allows gear shifts by tapping the selector forwards or backwards. It can be used in tough driving conditions or when shifting gear frequently, leaving the driver free to shift down, for instance. The Autostick function can be useful in some situations to improve performance or to avoid engine overheating.

