Road safety: retrofitting of mirrors to existing fleet of heavy goods vehicles

2006/0183(COD) - 11/07/2007 - Final act

PURPOSE: to reduce the number of accidents by retrofitting mirrors to Community registered heavy good vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Directive 2007.38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the retrofitting of mirrors to heavy goods vehicles registered in the Community.

BACKGROUND: a number of accidents in Europe are caused by drivers of heavy goods vehicles who are not aware that other road users are very close to, or beside, their vehicle – often related to a change of direction at crossings, junctions or roundabouts due to the “blind spot”. It is estimated that around 400 people in Europe are killed in such circumstances every year. Many of them are vulnerable road users such as cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians.

As from 2007 all new heavy good vehicles of more than 3.5 tons placed on EU roads have to comply with stringent provisions requiring them to be equipped with blind spot mirrors. (See Directive 2003/97/EC). This measure does not, however, address the risk that existing heavy good vehicles pose. There is an estimated 5 million heavy good vehicles currently in circulation to which Directive 2003/97/EC does not apply.

CONTENT: the purpose of this Directive, therefore, is to lay down requirements for fitting vehicles of categories N2 and N3 with systems of indirect vision (such as wide-angle and close-proximity mirrors, cameras, monitors, or other type-approved systems of indirect visions) to improve the driver’s field of vision and to increase vehicle safety. N2 and N3, in this case, refers to categories of vehicles which are not type-approved or approved as a single vehicle under Directive 2003/97/EC.

Some derogations to the requirements exist namely, vehicles whose remaining lifespan is short, vehicles which are equipped with lateral mirrors and whose field of vision covers only markedly less than the fields of vision laid down in Directive 2003/97/EC and vehicles where fitting with mirrors complying with this Directive is not economically viable. Further, vehicles in categories N2 and N3, which were originally registered and/or type-approved and/or put into service before 1 January 2000 and which are operated mainly for their historical interest will also not be affected by the requirements set down in this Directive.

By 6 August 2011, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and to the Council a report on the implementation of this Directive together with a study on blind spot accidents covering all vehicles and costs incurred, with the aim of improving road safety. On the basis of a more comprehensive cost-benefit analysis, the Commission's report shall be accompanied, if appropriate, by a proposal for the revision of existing legislation.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 03/08/2007.

TRANSPOSITION: 06/08/2008.