Road infrastructure safety management

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted a second report on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on road infrastructure safety management. The report was drafted by Helmut **MARKOV** (GUE/NGL, DE).

On 4 June 2007, the Committee on Transport had voted by a narrow majority to reject the entire Commission proposal, stating that it would not be in line with the subsidiarity principle and less binding measures, such as recommendations, would be more appropriate in this area. The plenary referred the first report back to the committee on 9 July 2007.

On 2 October 2007, the Council agreed on a general orientation on the proposal and endorsed the idea of a directive with non-binding annexes.

In this second report, the committee took up some elements of the Council's position, as well as a large number of amendments which had been tabled to the first report. It decided that the annexes to the Directive would not be binding and that Member States would be free to decide which provisions and guidelines to implement.

The main amendments adopted are as follows:

- Member States may also organise road infrastructure safety management in other ways. If the methods used diverge from those in this Directive, the approval of the Commission shall be required. They may also apply the provisions of this Directive, as a set of good practices, for national road transport infrastructure not included in the TEN-T network that was constructed using Community funding in whole or in part;
- Member States shall ensure that road safety audits are carried out for all major projects with a construction cost of at least EUR 10 million;
- corresponding signs must be in place to warn road users of road infrastructure segments that are undergoing repairs and which may thus jeopardise the safety of road users;
- in order to improve the safety of roads within the European Union that are not part of the Trans-European road network, the Member States shall establish a coherent system for the exchange of best practice, covering, inter alia, existing road infrastructure safety projects and proven road safety technology;
- the Commission shall facilitate the exchange of knowledge and proven practices among the Member States, making use, in that connection, of the experience gained in existing relevant international forums;
- the new comitology procedure with scrutiny shall be used in Article 10(5) on minimum requirements for the guidelines and Article10a (new) on adaptation of the annexes to technical progress;
- lastly, the annexes should include additional references concerning climatic conditions and seismic activity, the presence of sufficient safe parking areas and lay-bys, vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists), the use and testing of intelligent road signs, safety barriers and signposting of roadworks, to improve the quality of safety measures.