Road infrastructure safety management

2006/0182(COD) - 19/06/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 498 votes to 8 with 6 abstentions, a legislative resolution amending the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on road infrastructure safety management. The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Helmut **MARKOV** (GUE/NGL, DE) on behalf of the Committee on Transport and Tourism.

To recall, 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. The amendments adopted are the results of a compromise between Parliament and Council. The main amendments – adopted in 1st reading of the codecision procedure – are as follows:

Annexes: the annexes to the Directive would not be binding and Member States are free to decide which provisions and guidelines to implement. Annexes will be adapted in accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny.

Scope: the Directive requires the establishment and implementation of procedures relating to road safety impact assessments, road safety audits, the management of road network safety and safety inspections by the Member States. The Directive shall apply to roads which are part of the trans-European road network, whether they are at the design stage, under construction or in operation. Member States may also apply the provisions of the 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.

Road safety impact assessment for infrastructure projects: this shall be carried out at the initial planning stage before the infrastructure project is approved. In that connection, Member States shall endeavour to meet the criteria set out in Annex I.

Road safety audits for infrastructure projects: when carrying out road safety audits the Member States shall endeavour to meet the criteria set out in Annex II.

Safety ranking and management of the road network in operation: Member States shall ensure that the classification of high accident concentration sections and the classification of the safety of the road network in operation is carried out at least on the basis of three-yearly reviews of the operation of the road network. In that connection, Member States shall endeavour to meet the criteria set out in Annex III. 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. These signs shall also include signs visible during both day and night time and set up at a safe distance and shall comply with the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals of 1968.

Data management: for each fatal accident occurring on the trans-European road network, an accident report is drawn up by the competent entity. Member States shall endeavour to include in this report each of the elements listed in Annex IV.

Guidelines: guidelines, if they do not already exist, must be adopted within 3 years of entry into force of the Directive, in order to support the competent entities in the application of the Directive.

Exchange of best practices: a new Article states that, in order to improve the safety of roads within the EU are not part of the Trans-European road network, the Commission shall establish a coherent system for the exchange of best practice between the Member States, covering, inter alia, existing road infrastructure safety projects and proven road safety technology.

Constant improvement of safety management practices: the Commission must facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices between Member States, making use of the experience gained in existing relevant international fora, with a view to achieving a constant improvement of safety management practices concerning road infrastructures in the EU. Insofar as the adoption of specific measures is

required, such measures shall be adopted in accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. Where appropriate, relevant non-governmental organisations, active in the field of safety and in the management of road infrastructures, may be consulted on matters related to technical safety aspects.
Lastly, Parliament made some amendments to the Annexes 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.