

Side-impact resistance of motor vehicles (amend. Directive 70/156/EEC)

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Mr DONNELLY recalled that around 25 000 Europeans were killed every year in road accidents, to which could be added the countless number of people injured. The aim of these two reports was to reduce the number of deaths and serious accidents. The rapporteur did not agree with the two-stage approach to frontal and side-impact collision tests: as the second and most advanced of the tests was adequate and could now be used, it should be implemented as soon as possible. However, he felt that the car industry would need time to adapt; consequently, Parliament had tabled compromise amendments to reconcile the requirement of a competitive car industry and the safety needs of road users. Moreover, Mr DONNELLY considered that the problem of bus safety and child seats should be part of the next annual legislative programme. Mr BANGEMANN stated that in relation to side-impact collisions he could take over Amendments Nos 1, 2, 3, 9 and 11 and, in principle with some formal changes, Amendments Nos 4, 6 and 10. However, he could not take over Amendments Nos 5 and 7, one because it seemed better not to set the height of the barrier at the outset, and the other because the test authorities needed some room for manoeuvre to determine the dangers of the different seating positions. As regards frontal-impact collisions, Amendments Nos 19, 21 to 23, 26 to 35 and 37 to 41 could be taken over. Formal changes would be made to Amendments Nos 14 and 20 to 25. However, the Commission rejected Amendments Nos 13 (which laid down a definitive test speed), 24 (which required three-point safety belts for rear seats, not taking into account that this would be compulsory for all new vehicles once the Directive had entered into force), and 36 (because it imposed American, not European, requirements on the seating position of test dummies). The Commissioner also noted that the Commission was in the process of drawing up a proposal for a directive on the safety of buses and a proposal for a regulation on child seats. As regards the front sections of vehicles, Mr BANGEMANN stated that a proposal containing technical modifications to prevent the dangers to pedestrians was being prepared.