

Community's railways: safety, licensing, levying of charges, certification. 2nd package

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The Conciliation Committee reached agreement on the directive on safety on the Community's railways. The main points of the compromise are as follows: - status of national safety rules and the Commission's role: the Member States agreed to keep the introduction of national safety rules to a minimum with an ultimate objective of establishing a situation in which European rules apply. As a result of conciliation, the Commission's powers to scrutinise new national safety rules were considerably strengthened: it was given the power to suspend the application of a national safety rule for a maximum period of six months if there is a serious doubt about the compatibility of draft safety rules with the European rules or if the Commission considers that it constitutes a means of arbitrary discrimination or a disguised restriction on rail transport operation between Member States. The final verdict on the conformity of new national safety rules with Community legislation lies with a regulatory committee; - training for train drivers as well as on-board and ground-based safety staff and their certificates: the Member States will be obliged to ensure access to training facilities for train drivers, on-board safety personnel as well as for ground-based infrastructure managers and their staff performing vital safety tasks. To allow mobility of these members of staff between railways companies, Parliament and Council agreed that train drivers, on-board safety personnel as well as ground-based infrastructure managers will have the right to have access to and obtain copies of all documents attesting to their qualifications. Railway undertakings will have the right to take into account all previous training, qualifications and experience.