

# Road transport: distribution of permits for heavy goods vehicles travelling in Switzerland

1999/0022(COD) - 08/12/2000 - Council position

Since the Commission submitted its amended proposal in March 2000, the Council's discussions on the matter have been informed by a concern to abide fully by the outcome of the European Parliament's first reading, including the amendments tabled by the Parliament, which the Commission took on board in its amended proposal. However, in establishing its common position the Council has found itself obliged to take account of a number of factors and developments which have arisen in the intervening period. The initial Commission proposal was presented as an act implementing one of the agreements between the European Communities and the Swiss Federation, viz. the Agreement on the transport of goods by rail and road. However, owing to the fact that ratification procedures on one of the agreements in the package of seven signed with Switzerland are still under way in some Member States, these agreements, including the road traffic agreement on the transport of goods by rail and road, have not yet entered into force and are not likely to do so for some months yet. In the meantime the Swiss Federal Council decided, on 1 November 2000, to allow heavy goods vehicles of up to 34 tonnes to travel on its roads from 1 January 2001 and to open up quotas, from the same date, for vehicles between 34 and 40 tonnes and for vehicles that are empty or transporting light loads. The decision by the Swiss authorities accompanies the introduction of the RPLP (heavy traffic levy) on the Swiss network. Given this last development, the adoption of the Regulation has thus become very urgent, if Community hauliers are not to be deprived of the benefits of the Swiss decision. Nevertheless, given that the seven agreements form a package, the Council did not want the decisions to be regarded as advance implementation of the road traffic agreement. This concern is reflected in the structure of the text. The Council has therefore made a number of amendments, as compared with the outcome of the European Parliament's first reading, notably in order to uncouple the Regulation from the road traffic agreement. Furthermore, in drawing up the allocation scales, it took account of the latest statistics. In addition, it felt it would be useful to include a review clause on the basis of real flows after one year. The Council also took into account the deadline proposed by the Parliament for re-allocating unused permits.