Trans-European transport network: electronic road toll systems, widespread introduction and interoperability

2003/0081(COD) - 22/03/2004 - Council position

The Council states that the text of its common position is appropriate and balanced. With respect to the amendments proposed by the European Parliament in first reading, the Council observes that almost all amendments have been integrated to the letter or in spirit, partially or in full in the common position. The Council holds therefore that the text of its common position ensures that the aim sought by the amendments of Parliament is achieved. The common position differs from the initial proposal put forward by the Commission in the following two respects: - the common position proposes that steps be taken to maintain the coexistence of the 5.8 GHz microwave technology alongside the satellite technology, whereas the Commission's initial proposal advocated the imposition of satellite technology as a single solution for the future. Since the tabling of the original proposal, the position with regard to microwave technologies has been clarified, and the industry has made significant progress towards achieving standardisation and guaranteeing compliance with the Single Market's rules on open competition. In the light of progress to date, this technology can now be usefully retained; - the common position alters the Commission's initial timetable. It represents a compromise between Parliament's position and the position expressed by the majority of the Council. Henceforth the European Electronic Road Toll System will be deployed in accordance with the following timetable: 1) all the components making up this service will need to be defined by 1 July 2006 (Parliament would have preferred 1 January 2007); 2) the obligation to provide the service will apply to lorries and coaches no later than 3 years after the date mentioned in point 1 below, i.e. 1 July 2009 (Parliament would have preferred a time limit of 2 years beyond the date indicated in point 1, i.e. 1 January 2009); 3) this obligation will apply to the other types of vehicle 5 years after the date mentioned in point 1, i.e. 1 July 2011 (Parliament would have preferred a time limit of five years beyond the date indicated in point 1, i.e. 1 January 2011). Other modifications concern the following: - the Council underscored that the Directive does not affect the freedom of Member States to lay down rules governing road infrastructure charging and taxation matters; - the Council recalled that the Directive does not apply a) to road toll systems for which no electronic means of toll collection exists, and provided moreover that the Directive does not apply b) to electronic road toll systems which do not need the installation of equipment on board vehicles, and c) to small, strictly local road toll systems for which the costs of compliance with the requirements of the Directive would be disproportionate to the benefits; - The Council confirmed that Member States which have toll systems should take the necessary measures to increase the use of electronic toll systems, but provided that Member States only need to endeavour to ensure that by 1 January 2007 at the latest, at least 50% of traffic flow in each toll station can use electronic toll systems; - as regards the definition of the European electronic tollservice, the Council provided not only that the decisions relating thereto should be taken by the Commission at the latest by 1 July 2006, but also that such decisions should only be taken if all the conditions, evaluated on the basis of appropriate studies, are in place to enable interoperability to work from all points of view, including the technical, legal and commercial points of view. In case the decisions are not taken before 1 July 2006, the Commission should set a new date by which such decisions are to be taken in accordance with the regulatory comitology procedure; - in order to enhance the readability of the text, the Council decided to transfer the items whereupon the European electronic tolls service should be based from Article 4 to a newly attached Annex to the Directive (Article 4, paragraph 1 and Annex).