

# Road transport: recording equipment, tachograph

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It was essential to step up checks in the transport sector if infringements were to be detected and if existing rules were to be more effectively enforced. On this point the ESC highlighted the unfortunate fact that, even with tighter checks in individual Member States, there would still be disparities because the existing rules were interpreted in widely differing ways. Consequently, if tighter checks were to have the desired effect, the Commission should also address these problems. The ESC therefore recommended that the rules on driving and rest periods be streamlined when this proposal was being implemented, so as to facilitate greater practicability and effectiveness. The ESC endorsed the Commission's view that changes should be made as soon as possible to the existing control apparatus (tachographs) in lorries by making greater use of information technology. The use of a driver's card (smart card) seemed a vital component in tightening up checks. The proposed equipment to be connected to existing tachographs in practice still needed to prove its technological validity and had so far only been subjected to factory testing. The ESC therefore recommended the speedy introduction of a broader field trial involving a proportion (percentage) of the total number of vehicles affected by the tachograph requirement in each Member State. That would give both national authorities and haulage firms and drivers a chance to assess the scale of the practical administrative burden and ascertain whether control and safety requirements were met. Moreover, the Commission should work for a change in the AETR Convention to ensure that non-EU vehicles met the same control equipment requirements as EU vehicles. This should be scheduled to coincide with the deadlines laid down in the proposal.