International road transport: driving restrictions on heavygoods vehicles on designated roads, weekend bans

1998/0096(COD) - 22/11/2000 - Modified legislative proposal

On 25 May 1998, the Commission submitted to the Council a proposal for a Directive on transparent system of harmonised rules for restrictions on heavy goods vehicles involved in international transport on designated roads. This proposal whilst supported by the majority of Member States has proven to be very controversial with a large minority of Member States. In the view of the Commission this controversy is partly due to the original proposal not being clearly understood. Given the degree of resistance expresed against the original proposal, both by the general public and also in the European Parliament and the Committee of Regions, and given the need to have the proposal that is clearly and unambigiously understood the Commission wishes to bring forward an amended proposal that shall be acceptable to the largest number of Member States and understandable to the overwhelming majority of EU citizens. The amended proposal firstly states more clearly that this proposal deals only with international lorry traffic on the Trans-European road Network (TEN-R). Member States will continue to have the right to set unlimited driving bans both for all road other than the TEN-R network and all national traffic. Secondly, the amended proposal shall increase the time when driving bans shall be automatically permitted on the TEN-R road network to a period of 24 hours. This period shall be extended during the summer period enabling Member States to have driving bans on the TEN-R road network commencing at 07:00 on Saturdays in summer and, if desired, lasting uninterrupted until 22:00 on Sundays; The adoption of such limits ensures that the proposal does not conflict with most existing national driving bans, whilst simultaneously stabilising the situation on driving bans in the EU thus highlighting the need for accession negotiations to examine the driving bans in potential future Member States. The amended proposal shall clearly state in an annex which national public holidays are automatically covered by driving bans. This does not, of course, put into question that it is the exclusive competence of each Member State to choose its national holidays. This annex will be revised automatically upon each notification by a Member State. The proposal shall be amended to take into account the new procedures following the adoption of the Treaty of Amsterdam. Those aspects of the proposal aiming to harmonise the types of transport that shall be exempt from driving bans remains unchanged.