

Side-impact resistance of motor vehicles (amend. Directive 70/156/EEC)

1994/0322(COD) - 22/06/1995

The committee adopted the DONNELLY report on the lateral impact resistance of vehicles by a large majority. There had been very extensive consultations with regard to this issue. In particular, a public hearing held on 20 March 1995 had brought together the views of many experts from the European Transport Safety Council, as well as the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (EAMA), the International Automobile Federation (IAF) and consumer groups. During this hearing, all the participants agreed that it was essential to draw up uniform legislation on impact tests. There would therefore no longer be a first stage - mobile barrier with ground clearance of 260 mm - only a mobile barrier with ground clearance of 300 mm, which would more realistically represent real impact conditions. In order to allow the industry sufficient time to adjust, the legislation on lateral impacts would only apply to new vehicle types approved from 1 October 1998 and would not apply to current models until 2000. The report also proposed that, two years after the adoption of the legislation on lateral impacts, the criteria should be reviewed to determine whether or not the ground clearance of the barrier height should be increased to 350 mm. The rapporteur felt that the improvements to the Commission's text should significantly increase the safety criteria and thus decrease the number of deaths - currently 25 000 - and injuries that occurred on the roads every year. Mr DONNELLY pointed out that Commissioner BANGEMANN had welcomed the amendments adopted, and this had been confirmed by the Commission representative.