Motocycle industry and environment: components and characteristic of two- or three-wheel motor vehicles

1993/0470(COD) - 11/06/1996

The committee adopted the recommendation for a second reading by a large majority. A number of technical requirements (for tyres, external protrusions, lighting equipment etc.) differ from one Member State to another. This proposal for a directive therefore seeks to eliminate these obstacles to the internal market in motorcycles by replacing national regulations with harmonized provisions. Four areas are causing problems: tyres, handling, noise levels and emission limits. If plenary accepts the committee's proposal, it is more or less certain that this matter will land in the lap of the conciliation committee, where negotiations are likely to be extremely tough. In general, the committee reiterated the position which it took at first reading, i.e. that the manufacture, importation and sale of spare parts which can be used to modify a vehicle so that it no longer complies with the directive should be banned. In addition, it should be possible to license and drive motorcycles complying with the directive in all the Member States (the common position makes provision for a reservation with regard to motorcycles with trailers attached). As far as emissions and noise levels are concerned, Parliament and the Council agreed on the need to carry out a study before setting new levels. However, the committee did not agree with the date (2001) and felt that stricter standards should not be applied before 2006. As far as tyres are concerned, it rejected the idea of insisting on particular brands for high-capacity motorcycles and was in favour of users being able to use any brand of tyre suitable for the vehicle's performance index and the manufacturer's safety specifications. As far as handling is concerned, the report did not retain the various elements which would limit the scope of maintenance by the owner to no useful purpose. As far as noise levels are concerned, the common position set limits which the rapporteur felt were too stringent, would not be of any environmental benefit and would result in high manufacturing costs which would be passed on in sales with the risk that customers would opt for other, less environmentally-friendly means of transport. The rapporteur considered that the main problem was in fact the sale and use of illegal devices. With regard to the measurement of the noise from two- or three-wheeled vehicles, the committee opted for a system of average values rather than the higher value.