Excise duties: temporary quantitative restrictions for products brought into Sweden (amend. Directive 92/12/EEC)

2000/0118(CNS) - 06/06/2000

The committee adopted the report by Jules MAATEN (ELDR, NL) approving with two non-binding amendments a Commission proposal to remove restrictions on alcohol imports brought into Sweden from other EU Member States so that EU rules applied as from 1 January 2004. In one of these amendments, the committee recognised that harmonisation of travel allowances was not solely an internal market issue but also a public health issue - a key concern of the Swedish authorities who have a longstanding policy of imposing high taxes on alcohol with the aim of keeping overall consumption, and thus alcohol-related illnesses, down. However, it also emphasised that the phased removal of restrictions would allow the Swedish authorities time to put in place alternative means of combating alcohol-related problems. While acknowledging that tax questions were matters of national sovereignty, the committee also called for greater coordination of excise duties on alcohol among the Member States, on the grounds that one country's tax level can have an effect on its neighbours.