Road transport: training of professional drivers for the carriage of goods or passengers

2001/0033(COD) - 01/10/2002 - Modified legislative proposal

The Commission has made three types of amendments which are justified for the reasons set out below. First, a number of new provisions were accepted without amendment after the first reading by the European Parliament. These are intended to improve the technical definitions or to bring balance to or clarify the text and to go into further detail regarding certain points of the proposal. Second, the Commission accepted some amendments in substance, and made editorial amendments, in particular to make the text more consistent with other parts of the proposal or to define certain conditions, restrictions or exceptions more clearly. Third, the Commission adopted some parts of the amendments from the first reading if it considered them to be compatible with the aim of the proposal and if these parts provided added value, although this was not the case with all the amendments. As regards the amendments accepted, these refer to - adding drivers from third countries; - removing the limit of travel within a 50 km radius; - recasting Article 3 in the light of an amendment. It is useful to specify that a driver who has undergone vocational training may already drive a vehicle without having obtained a certificate of professional competence. However, the exemption must be limited in terms of area (territory of the Member State concerned) and time (training over a minimum of six months and a maximum of three years); - basic training : the amended proposal states that basic training may be designed as an integral part of vocational training which directly enables a driving licence to be obtained. In addition, it states that professional drivers for the carriage of passengers by road may work from the age of 21 on a vehicle in categories D and DE used, on a route which does not exceed 50 kilometres, for regular services for the carriage of passengers, provided they have undergone minimum basic training; - test of knowledge : the proposal specifies that the common part for the minimum basic training shall be subject to a final examination of professional competence. After successfully completing this examination, those wishing to become professional drivers shall undergo specific training in a company or an approved training centre. On completion of the two parts of the training, the common part and the specific training, a minimum basic training document shall be issued to the driver; - continuous training : the proposal states that the duration of the continuous training shall be thirty-five hours every five years. The programme shall be laid down in such manner that a single session shall be a minimum of seven hours; - the place of training and validity of training documents, the text states that drivers from a third country who work for an undertaking established in one or more Member States and are not normally resident in the Community shall undergo the training required in the Member State in which the undertaking employing them is established; - report : the amended proposal stipulates that eight years following the entry into force of this Directive, the Commission shall a report containing an initial evaluation of the implementation of this Directive, in particular as regards the equivalence of the various basic qualification schemes. The report shall be accompanied by appropriate proposals, ifnecessary. As regards the amendments made to the Annex: - Section 1(Training programme) of the Annex to the Commission proposal has been recast. The structure proposed by the European Parliament is clearer: a clear distinction has been made between the carriage of goods and the carriage of passengers and objectives have been set for each point in this section. - Section 4 : the introduction of an independent body responsible for examinations is justified and is a useful addition which is in line with the Commission's proposal. - Section 5 : the amendment introduces slightly greater flexibility as regards the previous experience of instructors. It has been found that the requirement of five years' experience as a professional driver would have made it difficult to recruit instructors.