

Road safety: protection of pedestrians, changes to the front of vehicles (amend. Directive 70/156/EEC)

2003/0033(COD) - 19/02/2003 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to reduce deaths and injuries that occur in accidents involving pedestrians through changes to the front of vehicles. **CONTENT** : as many as 8,000 pedestrians and cyclists are killed and a further 300,000 injured in the Community each year in road accidents. This proposal lays down requirements for the construction of motor vehicles in order to improve the protection of pedestrians and other road users by mitigating the severity of injuries in the event of a collision with a motor vehicle. The frontal parts of motor vehicles will have to be constructed in such a way that, when impacted, certain limit values are not exceeded. The proposed measures apply to passenger cars and light vans. As the construction of passenger cars is covered by Community legislation under the EC whole vehicle type-approval system set up by Directive 70/156/EEC, as amended, the proposed requirements will also be incorporated into this system. A commitment has been given by industry to introduce measures to increase pedestrian protection. The Commission has decided that legislation should be proposed, which establishes the major aims and the fundamental technical provisions to be fulfilled. Consequently, this proposal lays down the basic requirements to be fulfilled in the design of the frontal structures of motor vehicles with regard to pedestrian protection. They will apply to all new cars and light vans placed on the market within the Community. The requirements, which are based on the industry commitment, are provided in the form of various tests and limit values, described in Annex I. In order to comply with the proposed limit values, motor vehicles (passenger cars and light vans) will have to pass a number of tests: - in a first phase, starting in 2005, new types of vehicles must comply with two tests concerning protection against head injuries and leg injuries; - in a second phase, starting in 2010, four tests of increased severity will be required for new types of vehicles, two tests concerning head injuries and two concerning leg injuries. Within five years all new vehicles will have to comply with these test requirements. The Commission is aware of the fact that few, if any, current vehicle designs are capable of meeting all of the proposed technical provisions. Therefore, it was thought that an appropriate lead-time should be allowed before the proposed measures should be applied to new vehicle types and, later, to all new vehicles. The scope of application has been limited to passenger cars and car-derived vans up to 2.5 tonnes. Since these vehicle categories represent the vast majority of vehicles currently in use, the proposed measures will have the widest practicable effect in reducing pedestrian injuries. Considering the speed of technological development in this area, this proposal foresees that alternative measures to the requirements laid down in the proposal might be developed. A feasibility assessment will therefore be carried out by 1 July 2004 concerning the proposed technical test provisions, and in particular, other measures which potentially may have at least equal protective effects to those proposed. Should the feasibility assessment show that these alternative measures have at least equal protective effects the Commission shall consider relevant proposals to amend this Directive.