

# Multimodal transport: intermodal loading units, transferred containers or swap bodies

2003/0056(COD) - 07/04/2003 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE** : to present a proposal for a Directive on Intermodal Loading Units (ILU). **CONTENT** : the current diversity of ILUs, particularly the diversity of their handling and securing devices, hampers the efficiency of transshipment operations. Each ILU has to be examined to determine the handling technique and to adjust or modify the handling equipment. The same goes for the devices for securing them on to the vehicles or ships which transport them. Transshipments therefore become complicated and slow, and incur unnecessary costs. To solve this problem the handling and securing of devices of ILUs need to be made more uniform. The proposed directive on Intermodal Loading Units aims to achieve the following: - standardised, safer, more efficient and stackable equipment will enable easier transfer of freight from one mode of transport to another; - the Directive will enable all Intermodal Loading Units (ILU) circulating in Europe to be maintained and be subject to the periodic checks foreseen also for international traffic in the Convention for safe containers; - harmonisation of aspects of new Intermodal Loading Units after the definition of applicable standards by the European Committee for Standardisation. In particular, maintenance and handling of Intermodal Loading Units will be easier, allowing for substantial productivity gains; - finally, the Directive will enable greater security for new intermodal loading units through requirements for use of state-of-the-art alarms (for instance electronic seals) to counter break-in. - the creation of European intermodal loading units (EILU), a unit optimised for the transport of palettes, the most usual condition for goods using Intermodal Loading Units The European intermodal loading units combines the advantages of swap bodies (especially their larger size, offering a greater capacity) and containers (especially their greater strength and the possibilities to stack them). At this stage, the use of the last will not be made obligatory. The Intermodal Loading Units and European intermodal loading units will have to meet specific requirements, and the European Committee for Standardisation will be mandated to elaborate the standards necessary. These mandatory standards will then be adopted by a Regulatory Committee. The following items will then be able to circulate in the EU: - ISO standard containers respecting the maximum dimensions authorised by Directive 96/53; - the ILUs still in service at the date of introducing the standards; - the new ILUs and EILUs, developed to facilitate the transshipments between road, rail waterways and short sea shipping. Finally, the units covered by the directive must have a CE marking indicating that they conform to the requirements of the Directive. The symbols relating to the harmonised characteristics of the ILUs are separate from those indicating that the unit is a standardised EILU. Each intermodal loading unit must indicate that it has passed its previous periodic inspection. In the case of units that are less than five years old, that they have not yet needed to undergo such an inspection, and showing the date for the next inspection.