

International Carriage by Rail: accession to the COTIF Convention, as amended by the Vilnius Protocol, June 1999

2003/0269(NLE) - 17/11/2003 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : proposal to conclude an Agreement defining the terms of the EC's accession to the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) of 9 May 1980, as amended by the Vilnius Protocol of 3 June 1999. **PROPOSED ACT** : Council Decision. **CONTENT** : the development of rail interoperability, both within the Community and between the Community and neighbouring countries, is a key component of the transport policy, targeted in particular at establishing a better balance between the various modes of transport. The European Community has exclusive competence or shared competence with its Member States in the areas covered by COTIF, as amended by the Vilnius Protocol. The Community's accession to COTIF for the purpose of exercising its competence is permitted by virtue of Article 38 of the COTIF as amended by the Vilnius Protocol and will be able to take effect once the latter has entered into force following the period of ratification. On behalf of the Community, the Commission has negotiated an Agreement on the Accession of the European Community to COTIF with the Contracting Parties to COTIF. The commission proposes that the Accession Agreement be concluded in order to be applied immediately after the Vilnius Protocol enters into force. The Vilnius Protocol needs to have entered into force following ratification by at least two thirds of the signatories. Consequently, it is important that Member States continue and complete the ratification procedure in order that the Community may accede.