EC/Switzerland agreement: ecopoints for heavy vehicles travelling through Austria from 1st January 2004

2003/0322(CNS) - 22/12/2003 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : signature, provisional application and conclusion of an administrative arrangement in the form of an exchange of letters between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation concerning the transitional points system applicable to heavy goods vehicles travelling through Austria. PROPOSED ACT : Council Decision. CONTENT : the Agreement between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the carriage of goods and passengers by rail and road stipulates that a system of ecopoints equivalent to that provided for by Protocol 9 to the Act of Accession of Austria to the European Union will apply to Swiss operators in transit through Austria within the limits of validity of this Protocol. The Commission adopted a proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a system of ecopoints to be applied to heavy goods vehicles in transit through Austria for the year 2004. This proposal was the subject of an agreement between the European Parliament and the Council following the conciliation procedure on 25 November 2003. This agreement will lead to the adoption of a Regulation which will enter into force on 1 January 2004 (refer to COD/2001/0310). Currently, Switzerland is participating in the system of ecopoints on the basis of a bilateral agreement between Austria and Switzerland. This scheme will end on 31 December 2003. For reasons of equality of treatment and continuity of international commitments undertaken by the Community and Switzerland, the new transitional system of ecopoints should be applied to Switzerland from 1 January 2004. The Community should therefore now open negotiations with Switzerland on an administrative arrangement which will ensure that Switzerland participates in the new transitional points system. Given the short timescale in which the administrative arrangement must be applied (from 1 January 2004), the Commission calls on the Council to pronounce, at the same time, on the recommendation for negotiations and the proposals for Council decisions on the signature, provisional application and conclusion of the administrative arrangement. It therefore submits the relevant recommendation and proposals for decisions to the Council.