

Trans-European road network : minimum safety requirements for tunnels

2002/0309(COD) - 26/02/2004 - Modified legislative proposal

The Commission's amended proposal retains in their totality or in their substance a large number of the amendments adopted by the European Parliament in its first reading. A number of amendments pay particular consideration to disabled people, so that they can save themselves in the event of a fire. The Commission is in favour of a specific reference to disabled people in the Directive. A new recital is added and when emergency plans referred to in Annex II are drawn up, they must take account of disabled people in order to identify and implement the most appropriate solutions. The other amendments taken up by the Commission include: - the deletion of the definitions of "traffic volume" and "equipment class" of the legislative part, because these terms are used only in the technical annexes. These definitions will therefore be removed to Annex I. - the acceptance of alternative measures to structural measures which would be substantially more expensive for tunnels already in service only if they ensure an "equivalent or improved" level of safety. - the specification of the responsibilities of the Administrative Authority. - the inclusion of a new provision in order to avoid diluting the respective responsibilities of the Administrative Authority and the Tunnel Manager. - the provision for greater flexibility in carrying out periodic inspections under the responsibility of the Member States. As a consequence of this amendment, the term "Inspection Body" is replaced by "Inspection Entity" throughout the text. - the clarification of the role of the Tunnel Manager at the various stages of design, construction and operation of the tunnel. - the clarification of the tasks of the "Safety Officer". - the provision that where the Administrative Authority considers that the safety of an existing tunnel must be improved, it must communicate that fact to the Tunnel Manager, so that remedial measures can be taken, and the Safety Officer, for information purposes. The respective roles of these two players must be highlighted. - the provision for an additional period of six months compared with the original proposal for assessing compliance of existing tunnels with the Directive. - the provision limiting the obligation on the "Tunnel Manager" to send a plan for adapting an existing tunnel only to those cases where this is necessary. - the reinforcing of the role of the Administrative Authority and making it responsible for technical inspections. - the provision clearly indicating that the body responsible for carrying out the risk analyses is independent from the Tunnel Manager. - the provision that Member States may, for the purposes of carrying out risk analyses, only use a standard methodology at national level. With a view to transparency, Member States will have to make information on the methodology that they use available in electronic form. - the extension of the possibility of Member States obtaining a derogation from the provisions of the Directive to allow the use of innovative techniques providing an equivalent or higher protection level. As far as Annex I is concerned, the Commission in general accepts the amendments based on the results of the work of national experts, including in the World Road Association (PIARC), the working group of the Alpine countries and the Council experts group. The main amendments concern the following aspects: - The five classes of equipment in the original proposal which determine the type of equipment have been replaced by a more flexible system adapted to suit each type of equipment. - The threshold for traffic forecasts above which new tunnels will have to be twin tube has been raised to 10 000 vehicles per day and per lane. - The number of lanes reserved for traffic must be the same inside and outside the tunnel. - Gradients may not exceed 5% unless this is impossible for geographical reasons. - A new definition and stricter requirements are set out for escape routes, ventilation systems, lighting, electricity supply, pavements and control rooms. - The rules vary according to whether they are to apply to a new tunnel or an existing tunnel. This is the case for example for the minimum distance between emergency posts equipped with fire extinguishers and between water supply outlets which is increased to 250 metres for existing tunnels. - The descriptions of the responsibilities of the Administrative Authority and the Safety Officer have been condensed and moved to Articles 4 and 6 respectively, without prejudice to the drafting reservation relating to Article 7. - The maximum delay of 10 minutes for the intervention of the emergency services after an alarm for the longest and busiest tunnels, by means of a provision requiring the delay to be kept as

short as possible having regard to local conditions. This is acceptable subject to drafting amendments. -
The obligation to empty additional fuel tanks on heavy goods vehicles before travelling through tunnels has been scrapped.