International road transport: driving restrictions on heavygoods vehicles on designated roads, weekend bans

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The committee adopted the report by Gilles SAVARY (PES, F) amending the proposal under the codecision procedure (1st reading). It called for the rules to be accompanied by the introduction of a European road information system enabling all those in the road transport industry and road users to obtain detailed information in real time on traffic conditions on the TEN (bans, traffic regulation, etc.). Under the system, a monitoring centre for traffic on the TEN would also be created for statistical and analytical purposes. The committee specified that, for the purposes of driving bans, HGVs as defined in the proposal should also include component parts of the vehicle (tractors or trailers) where the latter are used separately. The aim was to ensure that drivers did not return home for the weekend in their tractor units (the tonnage of which was lower than the current thresholds for the application of bans), leaving their loaded trailers in lorry parks to be collected after the weekend. Other amendments focused on Member States' rights to extend driving bans. The committee deleted the provisions requiring Member States to receive prior authorisation from the Commission before imposing such bans, arguing that the proposed authorisation procedure was excessively complicated and was not in keeping with the subsidiarity principle. It further pointed out that an extension of driving bans could not be justified on social grounds, as stated in the proposal. Other amendments called for vehicles transporting fresh flowers or horticultural products (which do not travel well using refrigerated transport) to be excluded from the scope of the directive and for Member States which impose driving bans, thereby forcing drivers to spend a weekend or part of a weekend in lorry parks, to ensure that there are sufficient parking spaces and sanitary facilities available. Lastly, the committee wanted longer deadlines to be set for transposing and implementing the directive, to allow time for the legislative procedure to take its course and for Member States to take the necessary measures.