Road safety: compulsory use of belts for children under 12 years of age (amend. Directive 91/671 /EEC)

2000/0315(COD) - 25/04/2001

The committee adopted the report by Ewa HEDKVIST PETERSEN (PES, S) approving the Commission proposal subject to a few amendments under the codecision procedure (1st reading). Although it warmly welcomed the proposal, the committee expressed doubt about the practical implementation of the directive with regard to children. Whereas the Commission had suggested that children under 12 years of age should wear a child restraint system and should only be allowed to wear an adult safety belt if they had a body mass greater than 36kg, the report argued that some children under 12 were too tall to be carried in a child restraint system - irrespective of their body mass. The committee therefore adopted an amendment stipulating that children who were under 12 years of age but whose height was more than 150 cm should be allowed to wear adult safety belts. In line with its belief that height was an important factor in the safe use of safety belts, the committee adopted another amendment slightly modifying the provision in the proposal which stated that children aged 12 and over could wear adult seat belts, by specifying that such children should be over 150 cm in height. The committee also wanted the Commission to promote information campaigns on seat belts and, in particular, on the risks of transporting a child in a rear-facing safety seat in the front passenger seat when the passenger side airbag had not been deactivated.