

Community's railways: safety, licensing, levying of charges, certification. 2nd package

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The committee adopted the report by Dirk STERCKX (ELDR, B) amending the proposal under the codecision procedure (1st reading). The main amendments were as follows: - whereas the Commission provided for the possibility of Member States excluding light rail systems from the scope of the directive, the committee said that they should only be excluded where they did not make use of the existing railway infrastructure; - rather than simply being adopted by the Commission, the 'common safety target' (CST) and 'common safety methods' (CSM) should be the subject of a proposal to be submitted to Council and Parliament two years after the entry into force of the directive to ensure that those two institutions are fully involved in laying down the CST and CSM; - the Commission should ensure that the Member States keep the introduction of new national rules to a minimum and should encourage the adoption of rules at European level; - a single European safety certificate should be established three years after the entry into force of the directive, rather than five years as proposed by the Commission; - the committee proposed a new article providing for infrastructure managers to be required to hold a safety dossier (issued by the safety authority) to demonstrate that they have systems in place to control risks on their railway infrastructure. The dossier would be reviewed every fifth year and updated to take account of substantial alterations to the infrastructure, signalling or energy supply; - the provisions on training and certification should also apply to staff who do not accompany trains but who perform vital safety tasks (e.g. signalmen and stationmasters); - whereas the proposal provides for each Member State to establish a safety authority, the committee stipulated that Member States may also establish multinational safety authorities to supervise railway safety on specialised cross-border infrastructure such as long tunnels; - two years after the entry into force of the directive, the Commission should submit proposals on the introduction of a European driving licence for train drivers carrying out transfrontier services and on the harmonisation of driving time and rest periods for train drivers and staff accompanying the trains who are performing vital safety tasks; - two years after the entry into force of the directive, the Commission should give a mandate to the Agency to prepare for moving to a single language regime for operational communications in the European rail sector, such as already exists in shipping and aviation.