

European railway area: European Railway Agency for interoperability and safety. 2nd package

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The committee adopted the report by Gilles SAVARY (PES, F) amending the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure. It stipulated that the European Railway Agency should be "placed under the direct responsibility of the European Union" and that it should have "sole responsibility in the context of the functions and powers assigned to it by law". To avoid the risk of dual responsibilities and parallel sets of rules, the committee therefore specified that the allocation of similar functions and powers to national offices should be ruled out. It added that one of the objectives assigned to the Agency should be to help implement Community legislation aimed at improving the competitiveness of the railway sector and that the Agency must operate transparently and wholly independent of the interested parties. The committee also said that the candidate countries should be involved in the Agency's work from the outset. The report contained a number of technical and drafting amendments relating to the administrative functioning and role of the Agency in various areas. It also amended the provisions relating to the duties and powers of the Executive Director to bring them in line with those of the Director of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). Similarly, the provisions on inspections were amended so as to bring them into line with those of the EMSA. Another amendment sought to ensure that the European Parliament was involved in the appointment or dismissal of the Executive Director. The committee also adopted an amendment stipulating that the regulation should enter into force only once a definitive seat for the Agency had been established. If no such decision had been taken within one year of the legislation being adopted, Brussels should be made the provisional headquarters and the Agency should start work there.