

Trans-European road network : minimum safety requirements for tunnels

2002/0309(COD) - 10/09/2003

The committee adopted the report by Reinhard RACK (EPP-ED, A) under the codecision procedure (1st reading). Although MEPs backed the proposals for standard minimum safety requirements on infrastructure, operation, traffic rules and signing, a range of mainly technical amendments were adopted to improve protection of road users and harmonise safety equipment in tunnels. The committee was eager to make the directive less bureaucratic, without compromising important safety rules. MEPs felt the proposed four-tier administrative structure was too cumbersome and instead suggested a basic two-level set-up consisting of a Tunnel Supervisory Body and an Administrative Authority, with other bodies such as the Safety Coordinator having an auxiliary status. Some amendments adopted called for a complete revision of Annex I to the directive (which lists infrastructure measures, safety parameters, the number of tubes and lanes, tunnel gradients, escape routes and emergency exits, etc.). All these amendments were tabled in the light of findings of national experts from mainly Alpine countries such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy. The committee also wanted special consideration to be given to the safety of the disabled. In particular, it said that wheelchair users should be able to negotiate the first door leading to an emergency exit.