

Inter-operability of the European high-speed train network

1994/0112(SYN) - 01/12/1994

The committee has adopted the report of Mr. Frits CASTRICUM (NL, PES) on the Commission proposal for a Council Directive on the interoperability of the European high-speed train network. The Commission proposal seeks to create a regulatory framework with mandatory technical specifications for interoperability (TSI) and harmonized standards for the purpose of ensuring interoperability on the European high-speed train network, while helping to open up transport service and equipment contracts and enhancing the competitiveness of the railway sector overall. This last aspect is of particular importance given that the Japanese railway industry is competing on the international market with the European industry. At present, the EU has no common provisions on high-speed trains on the European network. The existing systems are largely incompatible and as a result locomotives and staff usually have to be exchanged at frontiers. These differences are an obstacle to high-speed trains in the European network. The directive is intended to lead to cooperation between the Member States and the railway and the industry and between the Member States and the Commission. Rapporteur CASTRICUM regards the proposal as the first step towards an interoperable network for all train systems. It is clearly important to link up the major European centres and economic regions through an efficient and interoperable high-speed train network. But the rapporteur feels that a People's Europe cannot be content merely with the interoperability of the upper market segment alone. If Europe is to grow together, cross-border transport at local and regional level, goods transport and, of course, combined transport must gradually become interoperable. The proposal is largely technical in nature and is the result of talks between the Commission, rail operators, the rail industry and government experts from the Member States. Its sole purpose is to define the technical requirements enabling high-speed trains to cross frontiers and move freely within the Union without any delays. All 9 technical amendments were carried.