

# Transport of dangerous goods by railway

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The Committee adopted the report of Mr. Pam CORNELISSEN (NL, EPP) on the Commission proposal for a Council Directive on the approximation of the laws of Member States with regard to the transport of dangerous goods by rail: a. the objectives and substance of the proposal Owing to the increase in the transport of dangerous goods by rail and the associated risks, rules are needed to guarantee a uniform level of safety within the EU. The international transport of dangerous goods is currently governed by the Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID). All Member States are Contracting Parties to this Convention, although the EU itself is not. These regulations only cover the transport of dangerous goods between, and not within, the States involved. Quite apart from the safety aspect, the diverse safety standards applicable within the EU constitute a substantial obstacle to the free circulation of goods throughout the Community. The risk of distortions of competition is further aggravated by the existence of numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements between Member States. Some of these agreements which exist alongside the RID diverge substantially from the RID and that is why EU legislation is required. Given the fact that international rules already exist, the most effective way of legislating would be to extend the scope of RID to cover transport within Member States as well, since this would not involve drawing up new rules, but applying existing, universally recognized rules. Therefore, rapporteur CORNELISSEN feels that a directive is the most appropriate means of achieving the desired objective as quickly as possible. The two main aims of the directive would be firstly: to improve safety standards and, secondly, to create an environment for the transport of dangerous goods by rail which is genuinely compatible with the Single Market. b. Nevertheless, the Committee adopted some amendments considering the right of Member States to adopt special rules or grant derogations for transport operations of local significance, e.g. the transport of hydrogen cyanide in purpose-built tank wagons, or for the transport of dangerous goods on narrow-gauge, dock or mountain railways. Finally, the Committee adopted the amendment that this directive does not affect the right of any Member State to adopt rules governing the transport of its territory of dangerous goods by rail from or to States of the former Soviet Union. Germany, Finland and Austria shall ensure, by adopting appropriate measures and conditions, that a standard of safety requirement to that provided for by the RID is maintained. In Germany and Austria, the provisions of this paragraph should only apply to tank wagons.