Development of the Community's railways

1995/0205(COD) - 30/09/1996

A further liberalization of the Community's railways was supported yesterday by the transport committee. Adopting the Erich FARTHOFER report on amending Railway directive 91/440/EEC, the committee gave the green light for a further freedom to provide services for railways in the EU. The Commission proposal (cooperation procedure, first reading) provides for a substantial expansion of access rights, which will increase competition. He, however, regretted that vital elements of the directive had not yet been transposed into law in most of the Member States. Unfair conditions for competition between established railway undertakings and newcomers still exist. The committee approved amendments on measures to write off the debts of existing railway undertakings and on harmonizing rules for all modes of transport, without which there would be a danger of bankruptcies, Mr FARTHOFER felt. He also proposed that cross-border passenger rail transport was not to be put at a disadvantage in relation to its competitors over VAT.