Registration documents for motor vehicles and their trailers

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In order to combat massive cross-border vehicle fraud, the Committee is demanding EU-wide harmonisation of registration documents for motor vehicles and their trailers. In adopting the report of its chairman, Jean-Pierre BAZIN (UFE, F), on the Commission proposal for a directive on registration documents for motor vehicles and their trailers, the committee emphasised that this type of fraud causes millions of EU citizens a great deal of hardship. It also pointed out that such fraud was increasing in many Member States. Efforts to combat the problem will be greatly aided by anti-fraud provisions in the registration documents. At present, registration documents issued by the Member States vary greatly. Although the 1968 Vienna Convention on road traffic laid down a minimum content for registration documents, some Member States have not signed or implemented the Convention. The Commission proposal aims to incorporate the Convention's provisions on the data to be shown on the registration certificate, with a view to making it more binding and including additional information. Four specific reasons are put forward to justify the proposal: -when the authorities carry out a roadside check in a Member State other than that in which the vehicle was registered, both the form and content of documents need to be clear and comprehensible; -it is difficult to check whether the driver is legally entitled to drive a particular vehicle if some registration certificates do not contain the relevant information; -unless the data are harmonized, it is difficult to register a vehicle in one Member State if it was previously registered in another Member State; -checking the rightful ownership of a vehicle's registration certificate is difficult if it is registered in another Member State, in particular if the applicant is not the owner. The solution envisaged is to issue a registration document in two parts. In countries where drivers are not required to carry the registration certificate with them (UK, Denmark and Sweden), the licence plate number refers the authorities to a central national register. If drivers from these countries travel abroad, they are required to carry the registration document or a copy. The rapporteur points out that the text of the proposal is a compromise. Attempts at harmonization have met resistance due to longstanding national administrative and legal traditions in the UK, Denmark and Sweden, which issue only a one-part registration certificate.