

Carriage of passengers: vehicles comprising more than 8 seats or maximum length 15m (amend. direct. 70/156/EEC)

1997/0176(COD) - 27/05/1998 - Document attached to the procedure

OBJECTIVE: to present a Commission report on the use of buses and coaches of 15 metres in length in the Community. **CONTENT:** Council Directive 96/53/EC of 25 July 1996 laying down, for certain road vehicles, the maximum authorised dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorised weights in international traffic omitted, in the absence of a compromise on the matter between the Member States, to lay down the maximum length of non-articulated vehicles used for passenger transport at Community level. This report therefore seeks to examine the overall problem of buses and coaches of up to 15 metres in length, using the information supplied by the national authorities and by bus and coach manufacturers and operators. It concentrates in particular on the technical and commercial aspects of using buses and coaches of up to 15 metres in length, on safety and environmental protection aspects, on infrastructure aspects and on legislative aspects. On this last point, the report proposes a series of options which will allow harmonised use of buses and coaches of up to 15 metres in length in the Community. Apart from maintaining the current system (i.e. free circulation guaranteed for vehicles 12 metres long used for passenger transport and the possibility for Member States who so wish to authorise the registration and circulation of longer vehicles on their territory), which is totally unsuited to the internal market and free circulation, 5 options may be envisaged: 1) Option no. 1: to set a harmonised limit of 12 metres for all new, non-articulated vehicles at European Union level (while allowing vehicles of up to 15 metres in length to circulate at national level for a given period); 2) Option no. 2: to set the harmonised limit at 15 metres for non-articulated buses and coaches, while imposing different requirements for the turning circle; 3) Option no. 3: to set the harmonised limit at 15 metres for non-articulated buses and coaches, with no further requirements (which would give vehicle manufacturers and operators carte blanche); 4) Option no. 4: to make provision for different limits depending on the number of axles; 5) Option no. 5: to set the harmonised limit at 15 metres for international traffic, while allowing national regulations which may differ from this (which would allow the free circulation in the Community of all buses and coaches of up to 15 metres in length on international routes). The Commission considers that option 5, possibly combined with options 2 and 4, would constitute a good basis for arriving at a fair solution. It would guarantee the right of vehicles of up to 15 metres in length to circulate at international level, while setting standards which seek to limit the drawbacks of these vehicles. It would also allow free and fair competition, while authorising the Member States to maintain lower limits for national transport.