

Technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles circulating in the Community

1998/0097(COD) - 11/03/1998 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: to ensure that road transport activities in the Community territory are safer and more environmentally-friendly. **CONTENT:** the proposal for a directive defines the legal framework for roadside inspections of commercial passenger and goods vehicles. It also seeks to introduce uniform assessment of the quality of maintenance of commercial vehicles in intra-Community traffic, by discouraging irresponsible operators from trying to obtain a competitive advantage by operating vehicles which are not properly maintained. The proposed directive provides for Member States to carry out roadside inspections of a representative cross-section of the commercial vehicles driven on their roads every year, in addition to annual technical inspections. These inspections may be carried out on roads, in ports, in other parking areas or at the operators' depots. The proposal does not stipulate the number or percentage of vehicles on the roads which must be inspected and leaves it to the Member States to define the scope of their national programme of roadside inspections. The proposal makes provision for a three-stage approach to roadside inspections: 1) first stage: visual assessment by a trained vehicle examiner of the maintenance condition of the vehicle. If the examiner suspects that the vehicle is poorly maintained, he may go on to the second stage; 2) second stage: cursory inspection of the stationary vehicle, including a check of its roadworthiness documentation. If the examiner considers that the vehicle is not roadworthy, he may go on to the third stage; 3) third stage: roadside inspection of the vehicle in order to identify maintenance deficiencies (e.g. exhaust fumes, bald tyres, lighting, speed regulator, brakes etc.). In the event of persistent doubt, the vehicle may be subjected to more detailed inspection and assessment at an approved testing centre. If the technical inspection shows that the vehicle does not comply with the technical standards set out in the Annex to the proposal or presents a serious risk to its occupants or to other road users, it may immediately be banned from the roads. Roadside inspections of the level of maintenance of commercial vehicles may be combined with other inspections to ensure that vehicles comply with road traffic regulations, such as controls on the number of hours driven, the weight and dimensions of the vehicle, road tax, driving licence or compliance with the conditions governing the occupation of commercial driver.