Transport policy: proposals and action programme for 2010. White Paper

2001/2281(COS) - 11/06/2003 - Implementing legislative act

ACT : Commission Decision 2003/425/EC setting up a group of experts to advise the Commission on a strategy for dealing with accidents in the transport sector

CONTENT : the Commission has decided to set up this Group of Experts since it considers that independent technical investigations of transport accidents and incidents improve safety by identifying the causes of such accidents and thereby preventing them from occurring. Such investigations into the causes of accidents must not be linked to compensation for damages or determination of liability. Therefore, they should be independent of investigations conducted by the judicial authorities, insurance companies, industry, operators and regulators, or any other party whose interests could conflict with the task entrusted to the investigating body or entity. The Group will advise the Commission on the need to improve existing legislation, and, where necessary, on the need to propose new initiatives for all modes of transport, including transport of energy (oil and gas pipelines), but excluding the occupational health and safety aspects.

The main points of the Decision are as follows:

- Composition: the Group of Experts will be composed of qualified individuals competent to consider matters relating to transport safety issues, in particular independent technical accidents investigations in all modes of transport, including the transport of energy (oil and gas pipelines). The Group will have 12 members and be chaired by a representative of the Commission.

- Appointment: The members of the Group will be appointed individually by the Commission on the basis of objective criteria of proven competence and experience. They will have a two-year renewable mandate with one possibility of renewal by a Commission decision. When their mandate lapses, members of the Group remain in office until such time as they are replaced or their mandate renewed.

- Terms of office, working groups and additional experts: the Group will meet in plenary session twice a year at the Commission headquarters on invitation by the Commission. The Group of Experts may set up ad hoc working groups. The Chairman may decide to invite other experts to address particular matters, at the request of a member or on his or her own initiative. The members of the Group of Experts and any experts invited will have their travel and subsistence expenses reimbursed in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission.

- Confidentiality: the members of the Group of Experts must not divulge any information they obtain through their work in the Group or its working groups.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: The Decision will take effect on 12/06/2003.