Road safety: seats, anchorages and head restraints (amend. Directive 74/408/EEC)

2003/0128(COD) - 19/04/2005

The committee adopted the report by Dieter-Lebrecht KOCH (EPP-ED , DE) broadly approving the Council's common position under the 2nd reading of the codecision procedure, subject to a few amendments. While agreeing that that side-facing seats should not be allowed in small buses and coaches, MEPs said that this prohibition should not extend to coaches in vehicle category M3 (class III or B) of a technically permissible maximum laden weight exceeding 10 tonnes in which side-facing seats are grouped together at the rear of the vehicle to form an integrated saloon of up to 10 seats. However, they specified that side-facing seats in such buses should at least be fitted with a head-restraint and a two-point belt with retractor. The exemption should have effect for 5 years following adoption of the directive, with the possibility of being extended if reliable accident statistics were available and there had been further development of safety belt systems.

The committee also inserted a new Article 5a aimed at ensuring that Member States could not grant certain exemptions providing loopholes which could undermine the purpose of the directive.