

Rail transport: interoperability of the Community rail system. Recast

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The Council reached a general approach on a draft directive on the interoperability of the Community rail system. This directive is part of a set of proposals adopted by the Commission in December 2006 which aim at improving cross-acceptance of railway vehicles in the Community.

The Council bodies introduced two important changes compared to the Commission's proposal:

- 1) all the provisions of the Safety Directive on authorisation of vehicles that are already in use are transferred to the interoperability directive. As a result, the directive applies to all existing rolling stock. At its June 2007 session, the Council already supported the concentration of all provisions on authorisation of vehicles in a single legislative act;
- 2) the principle that, once a Member State has authorised a type of vehicle, all vehicles of the same type will automatically be authorised to be put in service in that Member State, is incorporated in the directive. In addition, in order to facilitate the identification of vehicle types that have already been authorised in Member States, the Council proposes to establish a European register of authorised types of rolling stock. This register is to be set up and kept by the European Railway Agency.

The European Parliament's first-reading opinion is scheduled for adoption in November 2007.