

Railway transport: development of the Community's railways. 2nd package

2002/0025(COD) - 25/06/2003 - Council position

The Council adopted, by qualified majority, the "Second Railway Package", the Belgian, French and Luxembourg delegations voting against, establishing a single market for rail transport service. This package includes the following legal texts: - the Directive on the interoperability of the trans-European rail system; - the Directive on safety on the Community's railways; - the Directive on the development of the Community's railways (market access); - the Regulation establishing a European Railway Agency. In the framework of the overall agreement on Council's common position, the scope and timetable of market access formed most naturally important elements of the overall political compromise achieved by the Council. The Council could therefore not accept the two amendments, which aim to widen considerably the scope of this Directive by incorporating the transport of passengers by rail. The provisions relating to market access in the Council's common position may be summarised as follows: - railway undertakings shall be granted, on equitable conditions, at the latest by 1 January 2006, access to the entire rail network for the purpose of operating international freight services; - at the latest by 1 January 2008, railway undertakings shall be granted, on equitable conditions, access to the infrastructure in all Member States for the purpose of operating all types of rail freight services. Furthermore, by 1 January 2007, the Commission shall submit a report on the implementation of the Market Access Directive. Moreover, it may be noted in this respect that the Commission has presented a declaration stating its intention to present by end of 2003 to the European Parliament and the Council a proposal relating to the introduction of a European driving license for train drivers. With regard to the aforementioned provisions regarding market access, as well as concerning the date of entry into force, the Council has for the sake of clarity made reference to specific dates, rather than making this date dependent upon the eventual date of publication in the Official Journal, as initially proposed. The Council holds that this presentation is a clear signal to all actors involved. Furthermore, Council has agreed on the substance of the amendments which seek to maintain the references to the Trans-European Rail Freight Network (TERFN). In fact, amendments were accepted to the letter, whereas the other amendments were largely taken into account.