


Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) 1997/2058(COS)	Procedure completed
Promoting road safety in the Union: programme 1997-2001	
Subject 3.20.06 Transport regulations, road safety, roadworthiness tests, driving licence	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		21/05/1997
		PPE CORNELISSEN Petrus A.M.	
Council of the European Union	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	2016	17/06/1997

Key events			
09/04/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)0131	Summary
14/05/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/06/1997	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
25/02/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
25/02/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0065/1998	
10/03/1998	Debate in Parliament		
11/03/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0140/1998	Summary
11/03/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
06/04/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2058(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	TRAN/4/08796

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	COM(1997)0131	09/04/1997	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1394/1997 OJ C 073 09.03.1998, p. 0066	10/12/1997	ESC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A4-0065/1998 OJ C 104 06.04.1998, p. 0005	25/02/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T4-0140/1998 OJ C 104 06.04.1998, p. 0101-0139	11/03/1998	EP	Summary

Promoting road safety in the Union: programme 1997-2001

OBJECTIVE: This communication is aimed at introducing a large-scale programme for promoting road safety in the EU over the period 1997-2001. **SUBSTANCE:** Unless existing policies are changed, about one EU citizen in eighty will die in a road accident, on average forty years before his time, and one in three will need hospital treatment at least once in their lifetime following road accidents. Each year road accidents kill 45 000 people and injure 1.6 m in the EU: this is an unacceptably high burden on the Union's society and economy. In 1993 the Commission launched a first action programme on road safety (COM(93)0246 - COS0084), to make a contribution to addressing this enormous problem. It has now been fully carried out: considerable progress has been achieved, even beyond the stated objectives, notably in the field of type approval legislation and rules on the transport of dangerous goods. While the programme has made an important contribution to reducing the number of road accident victims, there is no room for complacency. This is clear from the social costs of road accidents, currently evaluated at approximately ECU 145 bn per annum in the EU. The Commission therefore proposes a new strategy to accelerate improvements in road safety, based on the principle that the high costs of accidents (which can be estimated at ECU 1 m for every fatality) should be fully taken into account in Member States' safety policies. Since in the past investments have typically cost significantly less and there are currently a wide range of measures that would be justified by this approach (e.g. pedestrian-friendly car design, improvements in seat-belt wearing, reductions in average vehicle speeds, etc), the application of this approach would give a major impulse to new efforts at all levels. The Community cannot accomplish improvements in road safety on its own. The Commission therefore proposes more widespread use of the cost-benefit approach to road safety at all levels of policy-making. The Commission believes that adoption of this strategy would lead to a progressive reduction in the number of annual road fatalities of at least 18 000 persons by 2010. The action plan at Community level proposed by the Commission targets both the determinants of accidents and measures to reduce the consequences of accidents when they occur. The three-pronged strategy comprises: - gathering and dissemination of information and best practice, notably through the setting-up of an EU road safety information system. The gathering and dissemination of information would concern the evolution of road safety in the Union as a whole, certain targeted areas and groups, the effective measures undertaken by certain Member States, implementation of existing law and the transfer of best practices; - accident avoidance measures: e.g. curbing of alcohol and drug/medicine use by drivers and the application of telematics for both traffic management and safe driving; - tools to reduce the consequences of accidents when they occur: the Commission will coordinate the development of safety rating programmes to ensure that consumers have scientifically correct information on the safety of different vehicles (e.g. new car assessment programmes). Proposals for various technical measures will also be submitted: these will include a type approval directive on pedestrian-friendly vehicle design, closed side guards for lorries and guidelines for both road and roadside design. In conjunction with measures to be taken by Member States and regional authorities in accordance with the cost-benefit approach, the proposed actions at Community level would lead to significant reductions in casualties. The resulting fall in accident costs would represent important social benefits, enhance the sustainability of the transport system and strengthen the EU's competitiveness ?

Promoting road safety in the Union: programme 1997-2001

The Committee fully supports the initiatives designed to promote road safety, and welcomes the Commission communication and the conclusions of the Transport Council meeting of 17 and 18 June 1997. It takes the view that the European Union's priorities should be the coordination of initiatives, a better understanding of the problems and how to solve them, and fostering greater commitment on the part of both politicians and road-users. ?

Promoting road safety in the Union: programme 1997-2001

By adopting Pam CORNELISSEN's (EPP, NL) report on the Commission's communication "Promoting road safety in the EU - the programme

for 1997-2001" the Committee has affirmed its wish to give EU-wide priority to measures to improve safety for all modes of transport. The EU should establish a numerical target to reduce the annual deaths from the current level of 45.000 to a maximum of 25.000 by the year 2010. In this respect, the following initiatives are considered as EU priority actions needed to achieve the aim of halving fatalities within 15 years: -Legislation needs to be passed and other measures taken which would encourage road users to behave in a more safety-minded manner. These measures would include: *the education of drivers; *the introduction of an EU-wide penalty points system for driving licences; *the production of safer vehicles, and *financial support for the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NPCA) to allow the rating system for the safety of cars. Other proposals: - improvement in the safety of road infrastructure including, in particular, the establishment of EU guidelines on road safety impact assessment, a mandatory safety impact assessment of all new road transport infrastructure projects and technical guidelines on speed reduction, low cost measures and safety audit; - legislation to limit the maximum amount of driver's blood alcohol concentration to 0.5 mg/ml in accordance with the proposal before the Council since 1989; - to prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages in filling stations on motorways, as well as provisions to ensure compliance with such legislation and the standardization of apparatus for testing breath alcohol levels - legislation to harmonise speed limits for the various categories of motor vehicles and roads, including urban residential areas. The Committee also asked for more judicial cooperation between the member states in order to ensure the mutual recognition of the withdrawal of driving licences at EU level and to facilitate effective cross border enforcement of penalties. The rapporteur believed that these targets at EU level would confirm that the political will exists for effective action and would send a signal to EU citizens that substantial action is now being taken to reduce road traffic accidents. Apart from all the legislation mentioned above, he emphasized that law enforcement is effective only if the public is concerned about the risk of being caught and prosecuted. Finally, special attention should be paid to young drivers: Most of the 15.000 15-24 years old people killed in the EU traffic die in the first year after receiving a driving licence. The mortality rate in this age bracket is 50-90% higher than for the population as a whole.?

Promoting road safety in the Union: programme 1997-2001

In adopting the report by Mr Petrus A.M. CORNELISSEN (PPE, NL) on promoting road safety, Parliament expressed the view that it was of major political importance to assign priority to measures to improve safety for all modes of transport. It hoped that all Member States would adopt radical measures to reduce the number of road accidents and that the EU would establish a numerical target for reducing the annual death-rate (from the current level of 45 000 to 25 000 by the year 2000). Parliament welcomed the programme for 1997-2001 proposed by the Commission, but drew attention to certain shortcomings in it. It particularly stressed the importance of adequate funding for road safety initiatives, and was concerned that the cut of almost 50% in the transport safety budget might mean that the new programme was slowed down. It considered that it was necessary, on the contrary, to improve the effectiveness of the programme by means of a clearer list of priorities, including the following: -the adoption of legislation to ensure the production of safer cars, lorries, etc., and improve car design from the point of view of the protection of pedestrians, as well as making other technical modifications, -the adoption of measures to limit drivers' blood alcohol concentration to 0.5 mg/ml throughout the Community and ban the sale of alcoholic beverages at motorway service stations, -harmonization of speed limits, including those in residential areas (on this subject, it called for an assessment of the impact of a 30 kph speed limit in residential areas and around schools), -introduction of a Community points system and a ban on the use of mobile phones while driving except where such phones were in a fixed position and could be used hands-free, -measures to inform drivers of the risks of taking certain medicines or drugs. Parliament observed that road safety would be greatly enhanced by improving social legislation applicable to drivers of heavy goods vehicles, particularly regarding rest periods. It hoped that Member States would consider the possibility of setting up national transport safety boards to conduct independent inquiries and make recommendations. It called on the Commission to report every two years on the progress achieved with regard to road safety.?