


Procedure file

Basic information		
SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)	1997/0199(SYN)	Procedure completed
Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration		
Subject 3.20.06 Transport regulations, road safety, roadworthiness tests, driving licence		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		23/09/1997
		NI LE RACHINEL Fernand	
	Former committee responsible		
Council of the European Union	TRAN Transport and Tourism		23/09/1997
		NI LE RACHINEL Fernand	
	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	2128	03/11/1998
	Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	2103	05/06/1998
	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	2074	17/03/1998

Key events			
15/07/1997	Legislative proposal published	COM(1997)0366	Summary
15/09/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/01/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
20/01/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A4-0024/1998	
18/02/1998	Debate in Parliament		Summary
19/02/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0083/1998	Summary
15/04/1998	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1998)0227	Summary
05/06/1998	Council position published	07023/1/1998	Summary
18/06/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
29/09/1998	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		Summary

29/09/1998	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A4-0349/1998	
07/10/1998	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T4-0554/1998	Summary
03/11/1998	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
03/11/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
10/11/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/0199(SYN)
Procedure type	SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legal basis	EC before Amsterdam E 075-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	TRAN/4/10199

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal		COM(1997)0366 OJ C 290 24.09.1997, p. 0025	15/07/1997	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A4-0024/1998 OJ C 056 23.02.1998, p. 0003	20/01/1998	EP	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0106/1998 OJ C 095 30.03.1998, p. 0032	28/01/1998	ESC	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T4-0083/1998 OJ C 080 16.03.1998, p. 0185-0212	19/02/1998	EP	Summary
Modified legislative proposal		COM(1998)0227 OJ C 159 26.05.1998, p. 0016	15/04/1998	EC	Summary
Council position		07023/1/1998 OJ C 227 20.07.1998, p. 0031	05/06/1998	CSL	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position		SEC(1998)1011	11/06/1998	EC	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A4-0349/1998 OJ C 328 26.10.1998, p. 0006	29/09/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T4-0554/1998 OJ C 328 26.10.1998, p. 0072-0082	07/10/1998	EP	Summary

Additional information

European Commission	EUR-Lex
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Final act

Regulation 1998/2411 OJ L 299 10.11.1998, p. 0001	Summary
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Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

OBJECTIVE: the proposal for a regulation seeks to facilitate motor travel and the free movement of persons within the Community.

SUBSTANCE: the proposal seeks to ensure that Member States which, under Article 37 of the Vienna Convention, required vehicles registered in another Member State to display a distinguishing registration sign when being driven on their territory, also recognize a distinguishing sign conforming to the technical provisions of the Community registration model. The main characteristic of this model was that at the extreme left it included a vertical blue zone with at the top a circle of 12 yellow stars representing the Community flag and underneath the abbreviation for the Member State of registration. ?

Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

By adopting the report by Mr Fernand LE RACHINEL (F, NI), the Committee endorsed the Commission proposal for recognizing throughout EU territory two options for plates borne by vehicles and their trailers registered in an EU country. (MEPs welcomed this proposal under the codecision procedure, which seeks to remedy a lack of harmonization between national laws on the recognition of number plates on vehicles driven outside their countries of origin. Some member states are parties to the 1968 Vienna Convention, which requires an oval sign composed of black letters on a white background to show the state in which the vehicle is registered but some of them do not recognize the Community sign and fine foreign vehicles bearing the Community sign only. Other member states have introduced the indication of the state of registration in the lower left-hand corner of the number plate. The distinctive oval sign was introduced by the Vienna Conference in 1968. Article 37 of the Convention provides for this sign to be placed at the rear of the vehicle. It may comprise no more than three letters on a white background and may not be incorporated in the number plate. The sign incorporated in the number plate (Community model) was developed in collaboration with national experts, following an EP resolution of 1988 calling for the incorporation of the European flag in registration plates. Some countries have introduced such plates, either on a compulsory (Portugal and Ireland) or on an optional basis (Germany and France). Recognition of the two types was considered a positive step since it removed the risk that EU nationals driving a vehicle in other member states would be fined because their vehicles or trailers bear a sign not recognized by the country they are visiting. The Committee could approve the proposal, provided that the state of registration is clearly visible. It was felt that European citizens with their national sentiments saw no reason to abandon such indications which to them are a traditional means of identification. It will now appear in combination with the European symbol.?)

Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

The Committee wholeheartedly supports the Commission proposal insofar as it assists road traffic and the free movement of persons within the Community and, by the same token, facilitates the completion of the single market. ?

Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

Commissioner Kinnock stated that the proposal did not mean that Member States would have to provide number plates which incorporated the symbol of the European Union nor that all vehicles would have to show the symbol of the country of registration. He explained that the aim of the proposal was simply to ensure that, where the rear number plate on a vehicle showed the distinguishing sign of the Member State of registration on the background of the Community symbol, this distinguishing sign would be recognised by the other Member States as a valid identification of the country of registration, without further need for the vehicle to show any other sign (in particular the elliptic sticker specified by the Vienna Convention). Mr Kinnock said that Amendments Nos 4 to 7 could not be accepted as they did not meet the need to lay down technical specifications with sufficient detail to achieve mutual recognition. He also rejected Amendment No 8 because the new regulation, once adopted, would be automatically applicable in the European Economic Area.

Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

Adopting the report by Mr Fernand LE RACHINEL (NI, F), the European Parliament amended the proposal for a regulation to the effect that Member States requiring vehicles from other Member States to display a distinguishing sign of the state of registration should recognize, in addition to the oval sticker required under the Vienna Convention, the sign included in the Community registration plate (abbreviation consisting of one, two or three letters representing the country of registration in white or yellow on an elliptical blue background and surrounded by a circle of 12 yellow stars representing the Community flag). Recognition of both distinctive registration signs would eliminate the risk of action being taken against Community citizens whose vehicles did not display the sign recognized by the country visited. ?

Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

The amended proposal particularly incorporates the amendments seeking to: - extend the scope of the Regulation to trailers; - stipulate that Member States must recognise the distinguishing sign displayed on the extreme left of the registration plate in accordance with the provisions of the annex to the Regulation as being equivalent to any other distinguishing sign which they recognise for the purposes of identifying the State of registration of the vehicle. The amendments were rejected which sought: - to insert in the definition of the sign a reference to the place where the sign must appear, namely on the extreme left of the plate; - to insert a new annex compelling Member States also to recognise a different distinguishing sign (elliptical). ?

Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

The common position corresponds to the Commission proposal and incorporates the gist of the amendments adopted by Parliament at first reading and incorporated into the Commission's amended proposal. In particular, the common position incorporates the amendments seeking to: - extend the scope of the Regulation to trailers; - stipulate that the distinguishing sign of the Member State of registration must be displayed on the extreme left of the registration plate; - stipulate that the distinguishing sign as defined in the annex to the Regulation is equivalent to any other officially recognised distinguishing sign. In addition, the Council made other changes, particularly: - deletion of Article 4, which laid down a system of penalties to apply in the event of breaches of the Regulation; - amendments to the annex: .the colour of the distinguishing sign of the Member State of registration may be yellow or white, irrespective of the background colour of the registration plate on which it is displayed; .the minimum height of the blue background is now 98 mm; .the height of the letters in the distinguishing sign of the Member State of registration (20 mm) is now a minimum value; .the annex includes a second model to take account of registration plates where the registration mark is displayed on two lines. ?

Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

The common position corresponds to the Commission proposal and incorporates the amendments accepted by the Commission after Parliament delivered its opinion at first reading. The Commission accordingly endorses the common position. ?

Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

The Committee will recommend that the House adopt the Council common position on the recognition in intra-Community traffic of the distinguishing sign of the Member States in which motor vehicles and their trailers are registered. In his draft recommendation for second reading under the cooperation procedure, rapporteur Fernand LE RACHINEL (NI, F) noted that the Council had incorporated all important amendments from Parliament's first reading in its common position. The aim of the proposal is to make sure that, where the rear number plate of a vehicle showed the distinguishing sign of the member state of registration on the background of the Community symbol, that sign was recognised by the other Member States as valid identification without the vehicle needing to show any other sign. Mr LE RACHINEL welcomed the fact that the dimension of 20 mm of a distinguishing sign was to be deemed a minimum. This would leave Member States the option of introducing larger signs thereby increasing the visibility of the national distinguishing sign.?

Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

The European Parliament adopted without debate the report by Mr Fernand LE RACHINEL (NI, F) on the common position on the recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member State in which motor vehicles are registered.?

Motor vehicles and trailers: recognition of the distinguishing sign of the Member state of registration

PURPOSE: to facilitate road traffic and the free movement of persons within the Community. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Regulation No. 2411/98 on the recognition in intra-Community traffic of the distinguishing sign of the Member State in which motor vehicles and their trailers are registered. CONTENT: The Regulation applies to vehicles registered in the Member States that are driven within the Community. As several Member States are contracting parties to the Vienna Convention of 1968 on road traffic, Article 37 of which provides that every motor vehicle in international traffic shall display at the rear, in addition to its registration number, a distinguishing sign of the State in which it is registered, the Council has adopted this Regulation which lays down the specification for the distinguishing sign. Member States requiring vehicles from other Member States to display the distinguishing sign of the State of registration should also recognise the distinguishing sign illustrated in the annex as being equivalent to any other distinguishing sign that they recognise for the purpose of identifying the State in which the vehicle is registered. ENTRY INTO FORCE: 11/11/1998.?