



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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97/0150 (SYN)

**OPINION OF THE COMMISSION
on the amendments proposed by the European Parliament
to the Council's common position on the**

proposal for a

COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

on the registration documents for motor vehicles and their trailers

(presented by the Commission pursuant to Article 189 c (d) of the EC Treaty)

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1. BACKGROUND

Date when the proposal was sent to the European parliament and the Council	2 June 1997 ¹
Date of the opinion of the ESC	29 October 1997 ²
Date of the opinion of the European Parliament at first reading	28 May 1998 ³
Date of the amendment proposal for the Commission	07 August 1998 ⁴
Date of the adoption of the common position	27 October 1998 ⁵
Date of adoption of the opinion of the Parliament at second reading	25 February 1999

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Registration documents for motor vehicles and their trailers are drawn up by the Member States and differ widely from each other.

At international level, the only provisions relating to these documents are contained in the Vienna Convention on road traffic and cover the minimum content of a registration certificate to allow the vehicle to engage in international travel.

Nine Member States have signed and ratified the Convention, 4 Member States have signed but not ratified it and two Member States and the Community are not signatories thereto.

Therefore, since the Vienna Convention only provides for a minimum amount of information to be set out on the certificate, and the Convention is not in force in all Member States, it is appropriate to provide for harmonised rules at Community level.

¹ OJ No C 202 of 02.07.1997, p. 13.

² OJ No C 19 of 21.01.1998, p. 17.

³ OJ No C 195 of 28.05.1998, p. 11.

⁴ OJ No C 301 of 30.09.1998.

⁵ Docs. 11408/1/98 + ADO 1.

3. COMMENTS ON THE PARLIAMENT'S AMENDMENTS AT SECOND READING

Parliament proposes two identical amendments:

Amendment 1.

That the phrase 'the vehicle is fitted with secret identification marks' be added to the list of optional information contained in Annex I, section VI, under code letter E.

Amendment 2.

That the phrase, 'the vehicle is fitted with secret identification marks' be added to the list of optional information contained in Annex II, section VI, under code letter E.

4. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The two amendments deal with hidden security markings, invisible to the naked eye, which are placed on some components of some motorbikes. If a police officer stops a motor bike he suspects has been stolen and been fitted with false number plates, and if he has the necessary scanning equipment, he can read these codes and, in principle, check if they correspond to the vehicle described in the registration document. However there are a number of problems with this system: 1) The police officer would need to know which security markings correspond to which vehicle, and this is not shown on the registration certificate. 2) not all vehicles are fitted with security markings. 3) the markings are neither standard in format nor location. 4) very few police forces are equipped with scanners. Therefore, although the purpose of the amendments is to reduce vehicle theft, which the Commission fully supports, they are of limited practical utility.

Consequently the Commission rejects the Parliament's amendments (see annex).

ANNEX I

Common Position of the Council

Parliament's Amendments

(Amendment 1)

Annex I, part I, Section VI, point E, (new)

E) The vehicle is fitted with
secret identification markings

(Amendment 2)

Annex II, part II, Section VI point E, (new)

E) The vehicle is fitted with
secret identification markings