

**Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the 'Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council for the approval of agricultural and forestry vehicles'**

COM(2010) 395 final — 2010/0212 (COD)

(2011/C 54/13)

Rapporteur-general: **Mr JÍROVEC**

On 7 September 2010 the Council decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on the

*Proposal for a Regulation (EU) No .../2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council for the approval of agricultural and forestry vehicles*

COM(2010) 395 final – 2010/0212 (COD).

On 14 September 2010, the Committee Bureau instructed the Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption to prepare the Committee's work on the subject.

Given the urgent nature of the work, the European Economic and Social Committee, under Rule 57 of its Rules of Procedure, appointed Mr Jírovec as rapporteur-general at its 467th plenary session, held on 8 and 9 December 2010 (meeting of 9 December), and adopted the following opinion by 142 votes to 2 with 9 abstentions.

## 1. Introduction and gist of the proposal

1.1 The objective of the proposed regulation is to lay down harmonised rules on the manufacture of agricultural and forestry vehicles. Existing legislation will be replaced in order to align it with the principles of Better Regulation and Simplification. The proposal contributes to the competitiveness of the industry and to the functioning of the internal market.

1.2 Following the recommendation from the CARS 21 report, the proposal significantly simplifies the type-approval legislation by replacing 24 base Directives (and around 35 related amending Directives) in the field of agricultural and forestry vehicle technical requirements with one Council and Parliament Regulation.

1.3 The Committee considers that the codification of all existing texts in the form of a single Regulation would be a very useful exercise. The proposed codification includes an assurance that it will not introduce any significant changes and will only serve the purpose of presenting EU legislation in a clear and transparent manner. The Committee fully endorses this objective and welcomes the proposal in the light of this assurance.

## 2. Comments

2.1 Type-approval procedure is time consuming and the EESC is concerned that it would delay the introduction of the new machinery which could be disastrous for small volume manufacturers. The new Regulation must therefore be flexible enough to

permit continuous development of existing machines and permit the introduction of new types of machines.

2.2 For some types of tractors designed solely for off-road use, exemptions should be considered for those provisions that relate to road use. This is a particular problem in relation to specialist vehicles.

2.3 The EESC also believes that any regulations should be based on more speed classes than the present two. As technology improves the stability and braking power of tractors, the speed of fast road tractors will increase. Opportunities should be created for slower types of vehicles which will fall into the 'agricultural or forestry category'. The EESC believes that the proposed Regulation would hinder the development of smaller tractors by increasing unnecessary compliance costs while at the same time not recognising the changes needed on vehicles that can operate up to 65 km/h and with the possibility of even greater speeds in the future.

2.4 The EESC would also like to see the Commission address the peripheral issues relating to the use of agricultural or forestry vehicles on roads. In particular, the EESC would encourage European standards for driving licences, inspection of vehicles and road use. This would help to ensure that the rules and regulations governing the use of tractors would be common across Europe rather than the present differing national rules.

2.5 The EESC recommends that manufacturers be able to meet the requirements for entry into force of the Regulation, including the technical. Where this is not the case, there should be appropriate exceptional or transitional arrangements.

2.6 The EESC considers it useful with respect to Article 8 'Requirements on occupational safety' not to regulate further via a future type approval Directive, but rather by means of Directive 2006/42/EC on machinery.

Brussels, 9 December 2010.

*The President*  
*of the European Economic and Social Committee*  
Staffan NILSSON

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