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PRESS RELEASE

COMMISSION PROPOSES SAFETY LABOUR STANDARDS FOR ROAD TRANSPORT. -

The EEC Commission has just approved and forwarded to the Council a proposed regulation harmonizing certain social provisions in the road transport sector.

The proposal was drawn up in compliance with the Council decision of 13 May 1965, which provides for harmonization and upward alignment of working conditions in the three types of transport: rail, road and inland waterways.

Traffic between Member States is becoming heavier as trade expands within the Community, and the first measures implementing the above-mentioned provisions of the decision are to be taken for the sector in which the problems stemming from this development are most acute - road transport.

The aims underlying the proposal are threefold: to maintain road safety, to align and improve working conditions and to harmonize the terms of competition.

Among the problems involved are minimum age of drivers, composition of crews, time at the wheel, daily rest periods and the question of checks.

Minimum age

This is fixed at 21, but for the transport of goods in light vehicles (up to 7.5 tons) it is 18. However, holders of a skilled driver's certificate are entitled, from the age of 18, to drive any vehicle with a maximum authorized weight of less than 15 tons or where the crew includes another driver over 21 years of age.

Composition of the crew

A two-man crew is required in particular for goods vehicles with trailers or semi-trailers when the maximum authorized weight of the whole is above 20 tons and when the length of journey exceeds 300 km. For a transitional period of two years this distance is fixed at 400 km.

Time at the wheel

This may not exceed 4½ hours at a stretch, after which a minimum of 30 minutes rest is required. Maximum driving time per day is 9 hours in goods transport and 8 hours on passenger vehicles.

Daily rest

In principle the driver must have 11 consecutive hours of rest per day. However, under certain conditions, this may be reduced to nine or eight hours.

Checks

Crew members must record the various periods - driving, rest, other breaks, etc. - in a personal log-book. Before 31 December 1968 the Council is to decide on a suitable mechanical apparatus to replace this log-book.

The Commission is planning to submit to the Council a second proposal which will deal with the various problems not yet covered in the first regulation, in particular the working week, the weekly rest period, holidays, paid leave and overtime.
