

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1548/02
by Brigitte Langenhagen (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Digital tachograph

Once Technical Annex IB has been approved by the Council of Transport Ministers and published in the Official Journal, Regulation (EC) No 2135/98¹ will come into force. This means that, 24 months after its publication in the Official Journal, all vehicles put into service for the first time must be equipped with a digital tachograph.

One of the aims of introducing the digital tachograph is to ensure fully automatic recording which does not allow for any tampering. However, recent research has confirmed the suspicion, raised a number of years ago, that unauthorised interference is both possible and simple, particularly with regard to smart cards (see the report entitled 'Smart card found to be vulnerable', in the 'International Herald Tribune' of 14 May 2002). This means that security and data protection cannot be guaranteed.

How does the Commission view the research results? What measures will it take to prevent possible tampering in practice? How will it ensure that the requisite number of tamper-proof cards is available throughout the EU by the date set?

A further aim of introducing the digital tachograph is to ensure '(...)' that the data recorded are retrievable, clear, intelligible when printed out, and reliable (...)' (Regulation (EC) No 2135/98, Recital 6). Has the Commission verified whether the digital tachograph's print-outs can be understood by inspectors in the Member States and whether their interpretation leads to clear results? How can an equivalent level of training for inspectors throughout the EU be guaranteed in order to avoid distortions of competition arising from varying control mechanisms?

¹ OJ L 274, 9.10.1998, p. 1.