

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0048/03

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Luciano Caveri, on behalf of the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism
to the Council

Subject: Safety of coaches

Despite the decrease in the number of fatalities in road accidents, the annual rate of decline is levelling off, and it is still the case that more than 42.000 people are killed each year on EU roads. A comprehensive road safety strategy, guided by numerical targets, is needed to address this serious public health and safety problem. Reducing injuries which result from driver impairment is an important part of that activity. The recent tragic bus accidents in Siofok, Hungary, on 8 May 2003, when 33 tourists were killed, and in France, near Lyon, on 18 May 2003, when 28 tourists were killed, show that the human factor considerably influences road safety.

In order to address this serious problem, the Commission proposed a general revision of Regulation (EEC) 3820/85¹ on driving time and its replacement with a new one. Parliament strongly supported this action and completed its first reading on 14 January 2003 (Markov report). The Council has not yet adopted a common position on this subject.

1. In view of these tragic events and of the need to take effective measures as soon as possible, is the Council willing to accelerate the adoption of its common position on the Driving Time Regulation, taking into consideration Parliament's position at first reading?
2. In connection with driving time, is the Council willing to accept Parliament's demand for the introduction of a minimum number of road-side checks to be carried out in the Member States (2% of the total number of days worked)?
3. Given the importance of the installation of speed-limitation devices for road security, does the Council intend to exert pressure on the Member States so as to accelerate the transposition of the provisions of the Directive concerned into national legislation?

Tabled: 04.06.2003

Forwarded: 05.06.2003

Deadline for reply: 26.06.2003

¹ OJ L 370, 31.12.1985, p. 1.