

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0049/03

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 Commission

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) 3820/85<sup>1</sup> 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. To date, the wearing of seat belts has not been compulsory for coach passengers. Does the Commission intend to present a legislative proposal on the obligation for coach passengers to wear seat belts?
2. No Community legislation has been adopted on standards for safer railway crossings at major roads and, more generally, on standards for suitable road conditions and standards for appropriate road design. Does the Commission intend to take legislative initiatives in this field?
3. The Commission will very soon adopt the long-awaited new 'action programme on road safety'. Would the Commission support the demand for special focus on measures for the greater safety of coaches and, especially, on coach construction (roll-over protection)?

Tabled: 04.06.2003

Forwarded: 06.06.2003

Deadline for reply: 13.06.2003

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 370, 31.12.1985, p. 1.