



ROAD TRANSPORT : INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS: CAUTIOUS YES' FROM MEMBER STATES

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The 27 member states are in favour of developing intelligent transport systems (ITS) in the road sector but intend to remain in control of whether or not they will be introduced in their territory. On 10 May, the EU Council of Ministers officially adopted its common position on the proposal for a directive on ITS deployment in the field of road transport, a text aimed at establishing a general framework in support of this deployment across the EU. It must be clearly noted, however, that member states will have the last say on whether or not to introduce ITS in their territory. This was one of the challenges of negotiating the proposal.

Intelligent transport systems designate the application of information and communication technologies to transport: systems for the calculation of itineraries, driver assistance, electronic toll collection, emergency brake assist, etc.

The common position is clear: the mechanisms anticipated in the directive are "without prejudice to the right of each member state to decide on its deployment of ITS applications and services on its territory". Proving that the issue is a sensitive one, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Malta, Poland and Portugal had a declaration appended to the common position, which reiterates this principle and warns that they "will continue to regard this as critical in discussions on any future proposals". On the other hand, if member states decide to deploy some ITS, they must conform to specifications, which the European Commission is supposed to adopt in order to ensure the compatibility and interoperability of the systems.

A declaration by the Commission, which accompanies the Council's common position, says a bit more about the areas in which progress can be expected more or less quickly. By the end of 2012 at the latest, specifications should therefore be adopted on an emergency call service (**eCall**) interoperable throughout the EU and on information services concerning safe and secure parking lots (a genuine request by carriers). For the following year, 2013, this will concern specifications for systems making it possible to reserve available parking lots, as well as real-time traffic information systems. In 2014, specifications will be ready for multimodal transport information services.

ECALL

With regard to **eCall**, it should be pointed out that the Commission's ambitions have been heavily redefined by the Council and Parliament, which rejected the originally proposed idea of a single "pan-European" system. The formulation finally adopted allows the coexistence of interoperable systems. Moreover, in a declaration attached to the common position, France expresses its "strong reservations" with regard to the pan-European **eCall** system. "The Commission has not provided a sufficient guarantee in relation to the risk of disruption to the emergency services of the member states", it says.

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