

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 15.12.1995
COM(95) 696 final

95/ 0353 (SYN)

**DRAFT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON A
PARKING CARD FOR DISABLED PERSONS**

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1 In its medium-term social action programme (1995-97) (COM(95) 134 final of 12 April 1995), the Commission undertook, in section 6.3.3, to present a recommendation on the reciprocal recognition of parking cards for disabled persons with a view to facilitating their freedom of movement.
- 2 The question of parking cards for disabled persons was previously addressed by the Council of Transport Ministers in a recommendation of 6 December 1977 emanating from the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)¹, calling for:
 - parking facilities to be provided for disabled people;
 - appropriate parking cards giving entitlement to such facilities to be issued;
 - holders of parking cards from other member countries (of the ECMT) to be granted the same parking facilities as nationals of the country concerned, and
 - the necessary arrangements to be made, with these measures in mind, for the reciprocal recognition of parking cards.

Experience has shown, however, that numerous practical problems are encountered in spite of this recommendation, owing mainly to the lack of a standardised format for national parking cards, combined with comprehension difficulties arising from the variety of languages involved.

- 3 Against this background, the ECMT commissioned a progress report on the implementation of the 1977 recommendation. This report was completed in July 1995 with the title "Towards a common European parking badge for motorists with disabilities". It makes it clear that, in addition to the problems already mentioned, the main difficulty lies in the fact that, while most member countries of the ECMT are generally tolerant of parking cards for disabled people from other countries, there are no formal arrangements. A disabled person therefore has no way of knowing whether a national parking card will be accepted in a given situation in another country, and the absence of any formal agreement makes it impossible for such persons to assert their rights in cases of doubt.
- 4 The report therefore comes to the conclusion that the introduction of a European parking card for disabled persons is the appropriate instrument to give those concerned the right to use it to avail themselves of the special local parking facilities provided in the various countries.

¹ The European Conference of Ministers of Transport is an organisation of government representatives which was set up on the strength of a protocol signed in Brussels on 17 October 1953. The Conference Council brings together the transport ministers from 31 European countries.

- 5 The Commission is thus intent on putting forward an appropriate recommendation for the introduction of a parking card which can be easily administered.

II. THE COMMISSION'S POSITION

- 6 This proposal supplements the Community provisions in respect of a common transport policy aimed at improving road traffic safety, which includes the public parking of cars. Parking arrangements fall within the scope of transport policy. Parking facilities for disabled people take account of their special requirements stemming from reduced mobility and thus contribute to road traffic safety.

The goal of road traffic safety can be further pursued by making it possible for disabled people who travel abroad to avail themselves of the special local parking facilities provided, using a standardised card based on a Community model which is recognised throughout the Union, thereby making parking easier for disabled people who are not citizens of the country concerned.

- 7 Having regard to the principle of subsidiarity, the recommendation aims only to standardise the format of the parking card for disabled persons and to ensure its reciprocal recognition. There is to be no interference as regards national rules governing the issue of such cards or the parking facilities to which they give entitlement.

Such rules differ from one Member State to another, and a move towards uniform parking arrangements would be of great practical benefit to the disabled persons concerned. In this connection, the Commission also considers it possible to provide disabled people with information on the respective local parking facilities available in the Member States of the European Union. Appropriate steps are to be taken after presentation of the recommendation.

- 8 The recommendation is intended to standardise the format of parking cards for disabled persons and to ensure their reciprocal recognition. The idea is not to introduce a European parking card; on the contrary, parking cards will retain their national status, although they are to be designed on the basis of the European Communities model, as is the case with driving licences (cf. Council Directive 91/439/EEC of 29 July 1991 on driving licences, OJ No L 237 of 24.8.1991, p. 1). Consequently, reciprocal recognition is necessary to ensure that a card issued in one country can be used in the other EU Member States without having to be exchanged or applied for anew.

- 9 A standardised format makes the card readily recognisable. Previous difficulties arising from the variety of existing cards will be overcome. The proposed designation on the front of the card in all the official languages of the EU, as with driving licences, will also clear up any linguistic misunderstanding. Use of the Community-model parking card, with reciprocal recognition by the Member States, will facilitate parking throughout the EU for the disabled persons concerned.

- 10 The Commission takes the view that at the same time this will help to promote the integration of disabled people in both occupational and social terms. Opportunities for travelling to other countries by car, e.g. as tourists, will be enhanced.
- 11 The draft recommendation has arisen out of a process of wide-ranging consultation among the Member States and non-governmental organisations, involving the consultative bodies of the HELIOS II programme, namely the Advisory Committee (government representatives of the Member States) and the European Disability Forum (representatives of European non-governmental organisations, national disability councils or non-governmental organisations and the social partners), which were consulted in September 1995; the HELIOS Working Party on Mobility and Transport (government representatives plus one non-governmental organisation) was consulted in October 1995. Consultation also took place, in November 1995, with the ECMT's ad-hoc working party on the transport of persons with reduced mobility.

The Commission's initiative has been generally welcomed, with broad agreement being reached on the content of the recommendation and, for the most part, on the format of the parking card as set out in the recommendation.

III. THE SITUATION IN THE MEMBER STATES

- 12 A national parking card for disabled people is available in all the Member States. Spain has a number of regional variations.

Most of the national parking cards for disabled persons show the internationally recognised wheelchair-user symbol of accessibility, along with the name of the holder, the stamp of the issuing authority and the period of validity.

- 13 The parking facilities associated with the card are similar, entailing, for instance, parking of unlimited or extended duration, or exemption from stopping/parking prohibitions, with due regard for road traffic safety. The exact situation differs from country to country, though (and in some cases from region to region and from town to town).

This makes it necessary to provide disabled persons with accurate information on the parking facilities available in each country.

- 14 Under certain conditions, various Member States already operate a system of reciprocal recognition of parking cards for disabled persons, with formal arrangements laid down in some cases. However, the lack of standardisation causes considerable uncertainty as to the use of such cards among persons travelling abroad.

IV. PRESENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION

A. Legal basis

- 15 The recommendation aims to improve road traffic safety by making it possible for disabled people to avail themselves of the special local parking facilities provided, using a reciprocally recognised parking card of standardised format; Article 75(1)(c).

B. Provisions

- 16 *Point 1* advocates the introduction of a national parking card for disabled persons based on a *standardised* Community model.

Point 2 goes on to recommend that such a card be recognised on a reciprocal basis so that the holder of the card may benefit from the associated parking facilities granted by the respective Member States.

In *Point 3* it is proposed that the Member States should issue the parking card only to disabled persons with reduced mobility. The reason for this is that the parking facilities are intended to compensate for disabled people's reduced mobility by enabling them to park their car as near to their destination as possible.

Point 4 proposes 1 January 1998 as the deadline for implementing the recommended measures. The intervening period gives the Member States enough time to take the necessary steps.

Accordingly, the Commission recommends, under *Point 5*, that the Member States should, by 1 March 1998, furnish a report on the measures taken. These reports will also play a part in gauging the extent to which the disabled persons concerned have to be informed about the various parking facilities in the Member States which can be obtained using the reciprocally recognised, standardised parking card.

17 Annex

The Annex describes the format of the Community-model parking card for disabled persons, which is based both on existing national cards and on the above-mentioned Directive on driving licences.

Point A:

The card is the same size as a number of existing national cards and is two-thirds the size of the Community-model driving licence. The format chosen affords sufficient space for inserting the necessary details clearly.

Point B:

Blue was chosen as the colour because it is frequently used in connection with the stylised wheelchair-user symbol of accessibility, and is already used for certain national parking cards (e.g. in Belgium, Portugal and Luxembourg).

Point C:

The parking card is to be plastic-coated both to protect it and for security reasons, making it more difficult to forge. Only the space reserved for the holder's signature will not be plastic-coated, as is the case with cheque and credit cards. This avoids the need for the disabled person to go to the issuing authority before the card is plastic-coated. He or she can sign the parking card subsequently.

Point D:

This point describes the exact content and positioning of the text and other details shown on the parking card.

The front of the card contains all the elements necessary for recognition: the wheelchair-user symbol, designation in all the official languages of the European Union, period of validity, name and stamp of the issuing authority validating the document. As with driving licences, provision is made for the national distinguishing code of the respective Member States to be affixed, surrounded by the ring of 12 stars symbolising the European Union, with express mention being made of the fact that it is a European Communities model.

In view of the fact that, in some Member States, the parking card is linked to the registration number of the holder's vehicle, the registration number may, if required, also be shown on the front of the card.

It is not deemed necessary to include any other details on the front of the parking card for purposes of recognition.

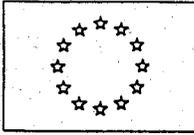
The reverse of the card contains data which will identify the authorised holder, namely surname, forename(s), date of birth, address and signature.

Also shown on the reverse are the basic conditions of use which, irrespective of specific national rules, apply to all parking cards based on the Community model, namely:

- an explanatory statement to the effect that the parking card, when in use, i.e. when the authorised holder wishes to take advantage of the associated parking facilities, must be positioned in such a way as to be clearly visible for checking purposes;
- a statement to the effect that the parking card gives entitlement only to the special local parking facilities available in the Member State concerned, as opposed to such parking facilities as may be available in the person's country of origin.

Point E:

This point deals with linguistic requirements applying to the parking card, corresponding to those for the Community-model driving licence.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] POLICY AND SOCIAL
[REDACTED] Education
[REDACTED] Information, Culture and Youth

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

**DRAFT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON A
PARKING CARD FOR DISABLED PERSONS**

The Council of the European Union,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 75(1)(c) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal for a recommendation submitted by the Commission,

In cooperation with the European Parliament¹,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee²,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions³,

Whereas the reciprocal recognition of a parking card for disabled persons based on a standardised Community model was advocated by the Commission in its communication on a medium-term social action programme (1995-97), forwarded to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on 12 April 1995⁴, and also in its report of 26 November 1993 to the Council on the measures to be taken in the Community regarding the accessibility of transport to persons with reduced mobility⁵;

Whereas it is stated in Title I, section 26 of the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers that all disabled persons, whatever the origin and nature of their disablement, should be entitled to additional concrete measures aimed at improving their

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social and occupational integration; whereas such measures should concern, in particular, according to the capacities of the beneficiaries, accessibility, mobility and means of transport;

Whereas a private car constitutes, for many disabled people who are unable to use public transport, the only means of getting about independently for purposes of occupational and social integration; whereas, in certain circumstances and with due regard to road safety, it is only right that disabled persons should be enabled, by means of a designated parking card, to park their car as near to their destination as possible; whereas disabled people should thus have the opportunity to avail themselves of the facilities provided by the said parking card throughout the European Community in accordance with the national rules applying in the respective countries;

Whereas, in view of the fact that parking cards for disabled persons may come within the remit of regional authorities, the Committee of the Regions should be consulted;

Whereas, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, Community action is necessary to ensure that parking cards for disabled persons are readily recognised on a reciprocal basis and to facilitate freedom of movement for disabled people, enabling them also to participate in tourist activities, thereby avoiding the practical problems which divergent national models may present for disabled people and supervisory officials;

Whereas, for the purposes of the common transport policy and with a view to helping to improve road traffic safety, which includes car parking, it is desirable that there should be a Community-model parking card for disabled persons recognised reciprocally by the Member States,

Hereby recommends the Member States to:

1. introduce a national parking card for disabled persons, issued in accordance with the respective national provisions, on the basis of the standardised Community model described in the Annex;
2. recognise reciprocally the parking cards for disabled persons introduced by each Member State in accordance with the standardised Community model, so that the holder of the card may benefit from the associated parking facilities available in the respective countries;
3. issue the parking card only to disabled persons with reduced mobility;
4. take the necessary steps to ensure that the parking cards for disabled persons based on the standardised Community model, and the arrangements for reciprocal recognition, are introduced by 1 January 1998 at the latest;
5. inform the Commission, by 1 March 1998, of the measures taken pursuant to this recommendation.

Done at Brussels,
For the Council

ANNEX

PROVISIONS CONCERNING THE COMMUNITY-MODEL PARKING CARD FOR DISABLED PERSONS

- A. The overall dimensions of the parking card for disabled persons as per the Community model shall be:
- height: 106 mm;
 - width: 148 mm.
- B. The colour of the parking card shall be light blue, except for the white wheelchair-user symbol which shall have a dark blue background.
- C. The parking card for disabled persons shall be plastic-coated, with the exception of the space reserved for the holder's signature on the left-hand side of the reverse.
- D. The parking card for disabled persons shall be divided vertically into two halves on both the front and reverse.

The left-hand side of the front shall contain:

- the wheelchair-user symbol in white on a dark blue background;
- the period of validity of the parking card;
- the serial number of the parking card;
- the name and stamp of the issuing authority/organisation;
- optional: the vehicle registration number.

The right-hand side of the front shall contain:

- in capital letters, the words "Parking card for disabled persons" in the language(s) of the Member State issuing the card. After a suitable space, the words "Parking card" shall appear in capital letters/small type in the other languages of the European Union;
- the words "European Communities model" in the language(s) of the Member State issuing the parking card;

- as background, the distinguishing code of the Member State issuing the parking card, as follows:

B:	Belgium	I:	Italy
DK:	Denmark	L:	Luxembourg
D:	Germany	NL:	Netherlands
GR:	Greece	A:	Austria
E:	Spain	P:	Portugal
F:	France	FIN:	Finland
IRL:	Ireland	S:	Sweden
		UK:	United Kingdom,

surrounded by the ring of 12 stars symbolising the European Union.

The left-hand side of the reverse shall contain:

1. the holder's surname;
2. the holder's forename(s);
3. the holder's date of birth;
4. the holder's address;
5. the holder's signature.

The right-hand side of the reverse shall contain:

1. the statement:

"This card gives entitlement to the special local parking facilities available in the Member State concerned.";

2. the statement:

"When in use, the card is to be affixed to the inside of the windscreen or, in the absence of a windscreen, to the front of the vehicle in such a way that the front of the card is clearly and wholly visible."

- E. With the exception of the right-hand side of the front, entries shall be shown in the language(s) of the Member State issuing the parking card.

If a Member State wishes to make the entries in a national language other than one of the following: Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, it shall draw up a bilingual version of the parking card using one of the eleven aforementioned languages, without prejudice to the other provisions of this Annex.



**Carte de stationnement
pour personnes handicapées**

Parkeringskort
Κάρτα στάθμευσης
Tarjeta de estacionamiento
Parkausweis
Contrassegno di parcheggio
Parkeerkaart
Cartão de estacionamento
Pysäköintilupa
Parkeringstilstånd
Parking card

Date de validité : 00-00-0000

N°: 00 00 00

Délivré par :

000000000000000000000000

Modèle des
COMMUNAUTÉS EUROPÉENNES

Nom :

Prénom :

Date de naissance :

Adresse :

Signature :

Cette carte autorise à bénéficier des facilités de stationnement de l'endroit dans l'Etat membre dans lequel le titulaire se trouve.

En cas d'utilisation la carte doit être apposée sur la face interne du pare-brise, ou, à défaut, sur la partie avant du véhicule, de telle manière que le côté recto soit bien et complètement visible.

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