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SECOND STAGE CONSULTATION OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

IRU Position on the Issue of Modernising and Improving Employment Relations

The International Road Transport Union (IRU), representing road transport employers, noted with great interest the results of the first stage consultation on modernising and improving employment relations as stated in the Commission's second stage consultation document.

They welcome the acceptance by the Commission of the need for more information and research relating to economically dependent workers, thus to better understand the different aspects and the possible relevance of an initiative at European Union level.

Having regard to the specific aspects of road transport, the organisation of the road transport markets and the mobile character of most of the working activities in particular, the IRU considers that a sectoral approach might be preferable if Community action were to be envisaged at a later moment, and looks forward to active involvement in the next stages (study, meetings) of the process announced by the Commission.

As regards telework, the delimitation of the notion of telework is of critical importance to the road transport industry. When considering specific rules for teleworking, work that actually is done away from the company but could have been done at the company premises is fundamentally different from work that is mobile by its very nature, like driving a vehicle. Some of the general principles, like 'voluntariness and the right to return' cannot apply to mobile workers even if increased use of information technology and electronic data transmission would make such mobile work qualify as 'telework' equally.

Likewise, with regard to working time, flexibility granted to mobile workers in road transport is needed first of all for achieving an efficient organisation of transport operations, and not for deviating from fixed slots.

The IRU therefore recommends that a Commission proposal envisaged in accordance with Art. 138, paragraph 3 of the EC Treaty and relating to telework should exclude mobile transport workers from its scope.
