



By email and post

Mr. Brian Simpson
Chairman of the TRAN Committee
ASP 13G0306
European Parliament
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Brussels, 22 April 2013

REVISION OF DIRECTIVE 96/53 ON WEIGHTS AND DIMENSIONS

Dear Mr. Simpson,

On 15 April 2013, the European Commission adopted a new proposal to modify the weights and dimensions Directive 96/53. The main objective of this proposal is to allow improvements in the aerodynamics of heavy goods vehicles and also use the opportunity to start improving the safety of the lorry cabin, in particular in relation to cyclists and pedestrians. We welcome the proposal's intention to enable smarter cabin design but also to allow the fitment of aerodynamic devices to the back of lorries and trailers which would make lorries cleaner and safer.

Changing the way European lorry cabins are designed, is a small but essential step towards reducing the environmental footprint of heavy goods vehicles. The 3-5% CO₂ savings resulting from a slightly longer and more aerodynamic lorry nose would directly translate into much-needed fuel savings for hauliers and transport operators. The modification of Directive 96/53 is also an important signal to manufacturers to make heavy goods vehicle design more aerodynamic and fuel efficient at-source.

The extra space is an important step towards making lorry cabins safer by enabling the fitment of crumple zones, the elimination of blind spots around the cab and a round nose to deflect

vulnerable road users in case of crashes. In addition, the extra cab space would improve the working conditions for hundreds of thousands of European lorry drivers.

We believe these improvements cannot wait. Every delay in the deliberations leading to the adoption of the new proposal means even more delay in further improvements in road safety as well as in the greening of heavy goods vehicles. The regulatory groundwork needs to be laid out now. Lorry manufacturers have indicated they want this opportunity to improve their products and should be given the opportunity to do so, as soon as the legislation is enacted, rather than years later. This is an enabling legislation so there is no need for lead time.

Similarly, it is important that the Commission expert group that will develop the proposal further, is given a clear mandate and a strict timeline to ensure timely delivery and avoid delays.

Therefore, we would like to ask for your active support to ensure a quick and smooth adoption of measures to improve the safety, fuel economy and comfort of European road freight transport vehicles. We would like to encourage you and your colleagues in the European Parliament and first and foremost in the Transport and Tourism Committee to move swiftly in order to provide sufficient time to discuss and finalise the review within this Parliament's mandate.

We are convinced of the tremendous potential of the proposed changes and are confident that their adoption within this Parliament would prove a very constructive contribution to meeting the objectives of the 2011 Transport Policy White Paper.

We are also aware of the on-going discussions concerning Article 4 of Directive 96/53. Although we understand this is an important and sensitive issue, we remain convinced that the priority is to improve the safety and aerodynamics of all heavy goods vehicles and hope the discussions related to the interpretation or modification of Article 4 will not lead to the delay of these essential improvements.

We look forward to discussing the proposal with you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,



Jos Dings
Director
Transport & Environment



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IRU Permanent Delegation to the EU



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