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Safer and greener lorries – Council confirms deal with Parliament

On 17 December the Permanent Representatives Committee approved, on behalf of the Council, a compromise agreed with the European Parliament on exceptions to current maximum sizes of lorries and buses to improve road safety and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Streamlined front cabs and aerodynamic rear flaps

A new lorry cab design with a rounded nose will reduce drivers' blind spots. The slightly longer front can also feature a crumple zone to absorb energy and diminish impact in the event of a frontal collision. All this is expected to help save the lives of numerous pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, the new design can make the cab safer and more comfortable to the driver.

Length derogations will also allow retractable or foldable aerodynamic flaps to be attached to the rear of the vehicle.

The rounded front and the rear flaps will both improve the vehicle's fuel performance. This will bring savings to hauliers and reduce harmful emissions.

Vehicles with the new features will have to be type-approved before they can be put onto the market. The Commission will propose the necessary changes to the current type-approval rules.

The provisions concerning the rear devices will start to apply as soon as the technical and operational requirements have been adopted. The cab redesign provisions will begin to apply three years after the relevant type-approval rules are in place.

Cleaner fuels

The use of clean fuels, such as electricity and hydrogen, will be promoted by authorising a weight increase of up to one tonne for vehicles using such fuels, if it is proved that those technologies need this extra weight. However, this additional weight cannot be used to increase the load capacity of the vehicle.

Bus weights

The maximum weight of buses will be increased by 1.5 tonnes. The new weight will accommodate the increase in the average weight of passengers and their luggage and of new equipment imposed by the safety regulations. This should promote public transport without causing faster erosion on roads.

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Promoting intermodal transport

Combining road transport with transport by rail, inland waterways and sea makes it possible to use the entire transport system more efficiently. The new rules will authorise an increase of 15 cm in vehicle length for the transporting of 45-foot containers in the context of an intermodal operation. Until now, transporting such containers on the road required cumbersome administrative procedures.

Checking vehicles for overload

In order to enable the inspection authorities to detect overload better, member states must start to identify vehicles in circulation that are likely to have exceeded the weight limit and should therefore be checked. This identification may be carried out by means of weighing mechanisms built into the road or through on-board sensors in vehicles that communicate data remotely to the authorities. Such on-board data should also be made available to the driver.

Every year each member state must perform an appropriate number of vehicle weight checks. The number of such checks should be proportionate to the total number of vehicles inspected in the member state's territory annually.

The vehicle-check provisions will apply six years after the entry into force of the directive.

Extra-long vehicles

The current rule on extra-long vehicles does not change. This means that member states may continue to allow the use of vehicles exceeding EU standards in their own territory as long as doing so does not significantly affect international competition. This concerns the transporting of large loads for instance by specialised forestry vehicles or through the use of long combination vehicles.

Entry into force, enactment deadline and review

The directive will enter into force twenty days after its publication in the EU Official Journal. After publication, member states will have two years to transpose it, i.e. adopt national provisions to comply with it. It will be reviewed three years after the transposition deadline.

Current maximum weights and dimensions

The new text amends the standards from 1996.

- [Current weights and dimensions directive](#)

Next steps

The new directive still has to be formally approved first by the Parliament and then by the Council (second-reading agreement). The final adoption is expected to take place in the next few months.

- [Road transport - Weights and dimensions](#)
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