

POSITION PAPER

WEIGHTS AND DIMENSIONS OF ROAD HEAVY VEHICLES

EUPAVE supports the proposal for a Directive updating the very old rules for maximum weights and dimensions of road heavy vehicles. Technical progress is key to develop a more sustainable transport network. In curbing transport emissions, existing solutions like the reduced fuel consumption of heavy vehicles riding on concrete roads can already make a difference today.

On 15 April 2013 the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive ([COM \(2013\) 195 final](#)) amending the “weights and dimensions of road heavy vehicles’ Directive”¹. This Directive contains the rules on weights and dimensions, which date from 1980’s, that heavy road vehicles (trucks, buses and coaches) must comply with for road safety reasons and to avoid damages to roads, bridges and tunnels.

This should allow manufacturers to develop more aerodynamic heavy vehicles in order to reduce fuel consumption, cut emissions of greenhouse gases, and also enhance the safety of vulnerable road users. The proposal was transferred to the EU legislators (European Parliament and Council of the EU) in order to discuss and approve.

EUPAVE welcomes the adoption of the proposal and acknowledges that the current provisions of the “weights and dimensions of road heavy vehicles’ Directive” are preventing technical innovations which would result in improvements in fuel consumption, energy efficiency and CO₂ emissions reduction while having hardly impact on bridges and roads. The issue of CO₂ from heavy vehicles needed to be addressed. In fact, heavy vehicles produce about a quarter of CO₂ emissions from road transport in the EU and some 5% of the EU’s total greenhouse gas emissions². On its pursue for a sustainable transport, EUPAVE believes that the European Union should take the opportunity to optimize the fuel efficiency of road transport, to

reduce the carbon footprint of heavy vehicles and to encourage the use of smart technology while minimizing damages to infrastructure through the use of durable concrete pavements. For that reason, the rules should always be revised considering technological improvements in order to have more efficient vehicles that allow reducing the number of journeys for delivery of goods, fuel consumption, emissions and traffic congestion.

Fuel consumption plays a key role in achieving the EU’s goals for a sustainable transport. There are many factors influencing the fuel consumption of a vehicle, including the quality of the road surface and the type of pavement. International research has shown that concrete pavements contribute to decarbonising of transport thanks to the reduced fuel consumption of heavy vehicles riding on non-deformable pavements such as concrete roads³. Those findings show substantial fuel savings – up to 6%. Every kilometre of concrete road instead of a flexible pavement can reduce the CO₂ emission, due to fuel consumption of heavy vehicles, over its 30 year lifetime by 1,000 to 4,000 tonnes. Even the smallest differences in fuel consumption of 0.02 litres/100 km result in huge savings of 376 million of litres diesel, € 564 million and 1 million tonnes CO₂ per year. This can already make a difference today.

For that reason, EUPAVE is supportive to this proposal containing rules that will result in economic and environmental benefits while ensuring a competitive and environmentally-friendly road transport.

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¹Directive 96/53/EC of 25 July 1996 laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorised dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorised weights in international traffic (Official Journal of the EU L 235 of 17 September 1996, p. 0059 – 0075).

²http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/transport/vehicles/heavy/index_en.htm

³ EUPAVE, *Concrete Pavements Contribute to Decarbonising of Transport* http://www.eupave.eu/documents/graphics/publicaties/eupave_decarbonising_of_transport.pdf