



# UNION EUROPÉENNE DES TRANSPORTEURS ROUTIER

## UETR position on the revision of the Weights and Dimensions Directive

UETR supports to the revision of the Directive 96/53/EC on the maximum weights and dimensions of heavy-duty vehicles ("Weights and Dimensions Directive") to allow longer and heavier vehicles (at least 44 tons) progressing the European Modular Systems ("EMS") in international road freight transport.

Currently EU Member States can allow heavier and longer dimensions on their territory and in cross-border transport, but only when agreed bilaterally. E. g. within the Benelux, 44 tons is generally allowed. For cross-border transport outside the Benelux, current Directive 96/53/EC limits this to 40 tons or 44 tons in the context of an intermodal transport. For national transport, the directive allows heavier weights. This leads to inconsistencies and operators' situations which varying from country to country. Moreover, the current EU Combined Transport Directive also provides for strict definitions and conditions, including on the distance travelled by pre- and post-haul road transport. As a result, more vehicles are actually needed to transport the same amount of goods. This is negative for curbing emissions and for mobility in general.

UETR therefore calls on the EU to legally allow cross-border traffic of 44-tons combinations through a wide and uniform system all over the EU MS. This will avoid hauliers to deal with different operational environments and also encourage greater investment in a more efficient manner by companies, provided they have the certainty that heavier and longer vehicles they buy can be deployed in the whole EU territory and not just specific/individual Member States.

Also, an EU-wide EMS should not be linked to other legislation (e. g. Combined Transport). Such new restrictions work against the accelerated reduction of emissions from the transport sector.

In our view, an EU wide EMS can represent an effective solution:

- to deliver environmental sustainability with more efficiency, higher capacity, increased productivity, and address positively the labour shortages in the sector- as reduced number of vehicles implies reduced emissions in the EU, congestion reduction and less drivers needed.
- to successfully roll out electric HD vehicles in the EU. Zero-emission or hybrid vehicle technology brings additional weight to the vehicles. To maintain the same load capacity as their diesel variant, exceedances of current sizes and weights must be allowed. The current European directive 96/53 already includes such derogations. For example, the weight can be increased by one or two tons for alternative-fuel or zero-emission vehicles (e.g. battery weight). But, for hydrogen and hybrid vehicles (dual fuel), a deviation at the length is also needed to maintain the loading capacity. This is because the fuel cells to be fitted at the rear of the towing vehicle take up a lot of space. As a result, a standard trailer can often no longer be hitched, but a shortened trailer must be used to stay within the current limits of the maximum length.

On electrification, UETR notes that this anyhow should be not considered an objective *per se* – the allowance of 44 tons should be for any vehicle independently of the source of energy used – as UETR



has always supported an energy mix and technology neutrality approach to deliver decarbonization.

In order to ensure complete technology neutrality, UETR proposes to provide an additional length of one metre for all low-carbon and emission-free vehicles. This might increase the possibility that all technology innovations for cutting carbon emissions are covered by such trucks.

Finally, EMS deployment would require robust EU and national policy support to make dedicated training of drivers accessible and affordable.

End

**About UETR**

*UETR is the European umbrella organization representing and defending the interests of more than 200.000 road transport undertakings (mostly Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) with a total capacity of more than 430.000 commercial vehicles. Within the Union, 95% of the road haulage companies are micro-enterprises with less than 10 employees (small firms or one-man operations). For more information visit [www.uetr.eu](http://www.uetr.eu)*

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