



**ESTA PRESS RELEASE
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European Parliament supports harmonisation of rules on indivisible loads

Members of the European Parliament have today backed moves to harmonise the numerous and complex national rules governing abnormal transport.

The plenary vote to revise the EU's Weights and Dimensions Directive (96/53) is an important step in a long campaign led by ESTA, the European association of abnormal road transport and mobile cranes.

The proposals were previously ratified by the Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee. Now that they have received the full backing of MEPs, they enter a process of consultation between the Council and the Parliament.

ESTA Director Ton Klijn said: "European operators transporting indivisible loads face a huge number of different national provisions covering language requirements, the escorting and marking of vehicles, permitting systems and more. These unnecessary and petty rules make the industry less safe and less efficient.

"Abnormal transport companies are crucial for the prosperity of European economy through their work in the renewable energy, infrastructure, oil and gas, heavy industry and power generation sectors.

"This is why ESTA has been active during the revision process of the directive and we strongly welcome the European Parliament's decision to harmonise national rules and remove administrative and operational bottlenecks."

The revision includes the long-awaited Europe-wide adoption of the standard SERT documentation for abnormal load vehicle registration – a move that ESTA has supported for many years.

SERT, the Special European Registration for Trucks and Trailers, is intended to reduce the paperwork and bureaucracy faced by the industry. It formed part of the European Best Practice Guidelines for Abnormal Road Transport, first published in a European

Commission Transport Directive back in 2005 but only adopted by a small number of member states.

Other proposals adopted by MEPs include:

- a 'one stop shop' per country for permits
- standardised permit application forms
- use of electronic permits
- harmonisation of escorting rules and vehicle markings
- a ban on language requirements for drivers
- permitting systems to be available in all EU languages.

The Weights and Dimensions Directive sets maximum authorised dimensions of heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs) used in national and international commercial transport and the maximum authorised weights of HDVs used in international commercial transport.

This ensures fair competition as member states cannot restrict the circulation of vehicles, which comply with these limits from performing international transport operations within their territories.

If accepted in full, the newly revised directive will also require EU member states to have a single access point for all information regarding national maximum authorised dimensions and weights of vehicles, as well as any restrictions, including on height, in specified areas or on specific roads.

And it commits the European Commission to establish a web portal which will contain all the above information about heavy and abnormal transport regulations, along with details of routes that can be used by vehicles transporting indivisible loads.

ESTA Director Ton Klijn said: "The importance of the heavy transport industry to Europe's economy as a whole is at last being recognised by at least some of our politicians and regulators, but there is a long way to go yet before our proposals are adopted. There is a lot of work still to do. Therefore, ESTA is calling on the Council to step up its efforts and support further harmonisation of abnormal transport in the EU. "

Green supporters of the revisions say they will also help improve transport companies' cooperation with other transport modes such as rail and reduce the sector's environmental footprint.

Notes for Editors

1. Abnormal transport constitutes an economically important segment of commercial road haulage as it transports anything from wind turbines and bridge beams to exceptionally large and heavy indivisible loads such as pre-built homes, electric transformers, chemical reactor vessels and airplane wings. Very often drivers need to travel considerable distances, in many cases, across national borders. European operators are confronted currently with fragmented national rules and procedures when providing transport services abroad.

2. ESTA is the leading European association for the abnormal road transport and mobile crane rental industry. It has members in 27 countries and represents national trade associations whose members are mobile crane rental and abnormal road transport companies. ESTA also welcomes affiliate members from relevant clients, government departments, regulatory bodies, service companies and all organisations active in its markets. ESTA strives to improve safety and efficiency in the heavy transport industry, by encouraging and disseminating best practices and advocating harmonisation of relevant rules and regulations in the EU.

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