

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions

2023/0265(COD) - 12/03/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 330 votes to 207, with 74 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 96/53/EC 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.

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amends the proposal as follows:

Improve driver's working conditions

The Directive is intended to improve the competitiveness of the road transport sector by promoting more cost-efficient and sustainable transport operations as well as encouraging intermodality.

In order to address this situation and enhance the attractiveness of the sector, Members consider that the increased dimensions required to install zero-emission technologies in vehicles should not be at the expense of sufficient cabin space and should **improve the comfort of drivers**. Where possible, concepts enabling additional space in the cabins for the installation of sanitary facilities on-board should be explored and incentivised.

Permits

Member States should issue the permits or similar arrangements in an **electronic format** and cooperate to further harmonise the permit issuing deadlines. They should also cooperate to harmonise the relevant rules for escorting transport of indivisible loads, such as on the prescribed use, markings and signs for escort vehicles.

European Modular Systems

Member States may allow the circulation in their territories in national and international traffic of European Modular Systems subject to all of the following conditions:

- for new EMS routes, the Member States should make a **prior assessment of the possible impact** of European Modular Systems on road safety, on the road infrastructure, on modal cooperation, as well as the environmental impacts of European Modular Systems on the transport system, including the impacts on modal split. The assessment should be made publicly available;
- Member States should ensure that appropriate measures are taken to avoid any **possible negative impacts on road safety**, including the safety of vulnerable road users, as a result of use of European Modular Systems.

Member States may establish minimum requirements or a **certification scheme** for the drivers of European Modular Systems, provided that they ensure proportionality and non-discrimination. Member States should cooperate to mutually recognise each other's certifications.

Electronic information system

Member States should set up and manage an electronic information and communication system with a **single national access point** for obtaining information, in a clear, accessible, and transparent manner, regarding national maximum authorised weights and dimensions of vehicles, as well as any restrictions, including on height, in specified areas or on specific roads.

To ensure that operators and citizens can access all relevant information in one place, a dedicated European web portal, in all the official languages of the Union, connecting the national electronic and communication systems should be established by the Commission, at the latest by 6 months after the date of transposition of this Directive.

This European portal should also make publicly available, in an accessible and transparent way, the parts of the road network where European Modular Systems, and, where available, vehicles transporting indivisible loads, can circulate.

EU label

Members proposed the introduction of a standardised EU label for the length of motor vehicles or vehicle combinations used in European Modular Systems (EMS) or which deviate from standard dimensions should be established at Union level. That EU label, displayed clearly and visibly at the rear of their motor vehicle or vehicle combination, should clearly indicate the length of all the vehicles or vehicle combinations of this Directive in order to help other road users to identify and familiarise themselves with these vehicles and reduce any possible risks caused by visibility restrictions or blind spots, for example when overtaking.

Member States should take specific measures to detect vehicles or vehicle combinations in circulation that exceed the maximum authorised weight.

Maximum authorised dimensions for vehicles

Members proposed to allow 44 tonnes (instead of 42 tonnes) for two-axle motor vehicles with a three-axle semi-trailer involved in intermodal transport operations.

Revenues

Member States should be encouraged to use the revenues generated from the penalties applicable to the infringements of this Directive, or the equivalent in financial value of those revenues, to **support the uptake of sustainable transport means** and hence mitigate the external costs generated by transport operations, encourage intermodality, and increase the sustainability of cross-border transport operations.

Reporting

By 2027, and every 4 years thereafter, the Commission should present a report to the European Parliament and to the Council, on the application of this Directive. The report should contain a detailed assessment of the evolution of national and international road transport.

The report should analyse whether the necessary enabling conditions for the market uptake of zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles in the Union, are satisfactorily met. In addition, the report should inform on technological advancements in the area of road transport which are relevant, including with regards to new technologies or new concepts and aerodynamic devices, as well as trailers or semi-trailers with zero-emission technology.