

Better working conditions for truck drivers across the EU

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New EU rules on road transport aim to end distortion of competition in the sector while providing better working conditions for drivers. Find out more.

On 8 July, MEPs will vote on the mobility package for road transport, following its [adoption by the transport committee](#) in June.

The new rules have been provisionally agreed with EU ministers and were [adopted by the Council](#) on 7 April.

The package comprises three key elements: better enforcement of [cabotage](#) rules, posting of drivers and drivers' rest times.

Though the EU already regulates all these areas, loopholes exist and difficulties in enforcement have led EU countries to implement them differently. The new rules will provide a clear and common framework for the road transport sector.

More rest and time at home

Under the new regulation, drivers should enjoy better rest conditions and be entitled to more time at home. For example, weekly rest of more than 45 hours can't be taken in a vehicle, but in suitable accommodation with adequate facilities, paid for by the employer. Work should be organised to give drivers more time at home.

To help detect breaches of the rules, smart tachographs will be deployed to record border-crossings and other activities.

Tachograph

- A device that records all of a vehicle's activities, for example distance, speed, driving times and driver rest periods
- It is already obligatory to install a digital tachograph in new goods vehicles weighing more than 3.5 tonnes

Clear rules on posting of drivers

Given the nature of road transport, stronger enforcement of sector-specific rules is needed to strike a balance between the freedom of operators to provide cross-border services and proper working conditions and social protection for drivers.

Drivers are not generally posted to another member state under service contracts for long periods of time, as is sometimes the case in other sectors, and the existing rules are applied in an uncoordinated way by different member states.

Posted workers

- Employees sent by their employer to carry out a service in another EU country on a temporary basis, in the context of a contract of services, an intra-group posting or a hiring out through a temporary agency.
- Different from mobile workers: they remain in the host member state temporarily and do not integrate into its labour market.
- The road transport sector is characterised by a highly mobile workforce.

The revised rules aim to prevent differing national approaches and ensure fair remuneration for drivers.

The new posting rules will apply to cabotage, international transport operations, (excluding transit) and bilateral operations (transport from a member state where the driver is based to another country and vice-versa).

Fair and competitive road transport sector

The updated rules on cabotage introduce concerted checks by two or more national enforcement authorities and facilitate cooperation and exchanges of information between EU countries.

Cabotage

- Cabotage is when a foreign truck makes national deliveries on the territory of another EU country right after an international delivery from another country.
- It helps trucks reduce empty runs and saves fuel.
- Cabotage was first introduced in 1990 through quotas.
- EU rules allowing for three cabotage operations within seven days of the international delivery remain unchanged.
- To avoid “systematic cabotage”, new rules introduce a four-day “cooling off”

period before cabotage in the same country with the same vehicle.

- In 2017, almost half of EU cabotage was in Germany, while almost 40% was performed by Polish hauliers.

In order to stop the use of so-called letterbox companies by hauliers, which distort competition, and to improve employment conditions for drivers, the revised rules will require road haulage companies to have substantial activities in the EU countries in which they are registered.

The rules will also introduce an obligation for the driver to return to the company's operational centre every eight weeks.

Rules will be extended to transport operators using light commercial vehicles of more than 2.5 tonnes, including equipping vans with a tachograph.

What are letterbox companies?

- Businesses that exist as a mailing address only, with activities taking place in another EU country
- A letterbox company is set up to circumvent legal and conventional obligations usually in areas like taxation, social security, VAT and wages
- They are illegal but often go undetected, as most EU countries have no legal or working definition of letterbox companies

Next steps

Parliament will vote on the reform during its plenary session on 8 July. The new rules will be considered to be adopted if no amendments are voted through with an absolute majority (meaning at least 353 votes).