

The Association of European Vehicle Logistics

Brussels, 18th March 2014

TRAN Committee adopts key ECG amendments

ECG welcomes the long awaited clarification of rules on the loaded length of vehicle transporters in the EU.

The Association of European Vehicle Logistics (ECG) welcomes today's vote in the Transport & tourism (TRAN) Committee of the European Parliament on the revision of Directive 96/53/EC on weights and dimensions of road vehicles. ECG is aware that this dossier is highly emotional in itself and comes in the midst of the campaign for the European elections. MEPs of the TRAN Committee still displayed a clear political will to finally give more legal certainty to the vehicle logistics sector.

Despite the many unique technical requirements of the vehicle transportation sector, the existing Directive 96/53/EC does not differentiate finished vehicle transporters from any other heavy goods vehicle. This is why the revision of Directive 96/53/EC is so critical to vehicle logistics. Specialised vehicle transporters are already allowed to load to around 20.75m in most national territories within the EU using front and/or rear overhangs. There is therefore no risk regarding road safety or infrastructure capabilities when harmonising their loaded length to 20.75m as in most cases we hope to simply maintain existing custom and practice. Furthermore their total weight is not an issue since it remains comfortably below 40 tonnes for a typical load. They have obviously nothing to do with "Gigaliners" which have been the focus of some emotional parliamentary debates so far.

ECG is therefore pleased that TRAN MEPs voted in favour of harmonising loaded length for vehicle transporters to 20.75m, which solves the current patchwork of national regulations encountered by ECG members. This will allow more cars to be loaded per truck thereby improving efficiency and reducing total CO₂ emissions.

According to ECG's Executive Director, Mike Sturgeon, *"Our association is fully aware that the stakes are high and go beyond vehicle transporters. However the harmonisation of their minimum loaded length will have two very powerful impacts: building a truly internal market for vehicle transportation whilst helping to deliver the environmental objectives of the Transport White Paper"*.

Importantly, these efficiency and sustainability benefits will be achieved by keeping the existing vehicle fleet instead of increasing it. ECG members will also remain as committed as ever to intermodality goals which are in the DNA of the association and its members.

Welcoming today's result, ECG's Executive Director Mike Sturgeon said: *"The EU prides itself on being the largest, most sophisticated single market on Earth. The TRAN Committee's vote has demonstrated that the harmonisation of loaded lengths for car transporters is well within the reach of EU lawmakers. The TRAN Committee's efforts will reduce the number of trucks on the road as well as decrease emissions, congestion, and accidents. ECG hopes that the plenary of the European Parliament, scheduled for 15th April, and the Council of National Transport Ministers, due to meet in June, will uphold the position of the TRAN Committee"*.

Background for the Editors

ECG, the Association of European Vehicle Logistics, has been the voice of the Finished Vehicle Logistics industry in Europe since 1997. ECG represents the interests of almost 100 member companies, from family owned SMEs to multi-nationals, and is the major champion of the European vehicle logistics sector. We represent all transport modes at EU level.

ECG Members provide transport, distribution, storage, preparation and post-production services to manufacturers, importers, car rental companies and vehicle leasing operators in 25 EU Member States, Turkey, Western Balkans and Russia. They own or operate about 390 car-carrying ships, 18,100 purpose-built railway wagons, 80 river barges and 18,500 road transporters. As a major employer, the industry plays an important role in contributing to the economic success of the European Union. Today, ECG members have an aggregate turnover of €22 billion and their economic impact on companies associated with the sector is estimated at over €34 billion. More than 70,000 people are employed directly by the vehicle logistics industry and an additional 160,000 are indirectly employed in this sector.

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