

Transport of dangerous goods by road: uniform procedures for checks

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The Commission presented a report on the application by Member States of Council Directive 95/50/EC on uniform procedures for checks on the transport of dangerous goods by road.

This seventh report has been drawn up on the basis of the annual reports received from the Member States and Norway covering the period 2015-2017.

The report concluded that all Member States carry out checks on vehicles carrying dangerous goods by road, and in general report these checks quite accurately. Some inconsistencies persist though, and the Commission continues its efforts to ensure that the reporting requirements under Directive 95/50/EC are complied with, and that compliance progressively improves each year.

Improved reporting

Some national reports were affected by delays due to administrative procedures for collecting, analysing and transmitting the information to the Commission, in particular when these procedures involve different public authorities. Although the situation had temporarily improved in 2015 compared to the past, the same pace was not observed for the following years, so the Commission had to reiterate its request to the Member States and invite them to improve the format and consistency of the data to be provided in future.

The Commission has received reports from all Member States for the whole period but, notwithstanding major improvements, not all the information has been received in the correct format.

Another major issue addressed by the recommendation was the concept of penalties imposed when an infringement is detected during a roadside check. Due to the differences in legal and administrative arrangements, some Member States were unable to track the outcome of the judicial process following checks revealing suspected infringements.

Comparison of data on checks

The total number of checks performed in the EU+Norway during the period included in this report was not constant on a yearly basis, varying from 136 966 in 2015 (in comparison to 150 348 in 2014) to 133 360 in 2016 and 144 056 in 2017. The number of checks decreased in 2015 by 10.68% compared to 2014, and the tendency to decrease was maintained in 2016, while a slight increase in the number of checks could be observed for 2017 (although not reaching the levels of 2014).

The national trends vary, as only 6 Member States (Greece, Luxembourg, Estonia, Slovenia, Ireland and Sweden) increased the number of checks over the period covered by this report with more than 25%, while Belgium, Denmark, Croatia, Italy, Bulgaria and the United Kingdom showed the highest reductions in the number of checks performed.

In terms of absolute number of checks in the EU, the share of Germany was the highest in 2015 (33.56%), followed by Poland (14.95%) and Austria (9.44%). The same ranking was observed in 2016 with 30.96% of the EU checks performed by Germany, 12.03% by Poland and 8.96% by Austria, while in 2017 Germany had the highest share (28.43%) followed by Greece (14.49%) and Poland (11.27%). It shall be underlined that this indicator is largely related to the size of the Member State.

Infringements

The number of infringements remained relatively stable during the reference period of the present report: in 2015 one check out of 5 affirmed or suspected an infringement in the carriage of dangerous goods, while in 2017 it was one out of 5.8 checks. In figures, this corresponds to 79 103 out of the 417 343 total roadside checks performed in the EU+Norway in the three years covered by this report. Where infringements were detected, in 40% of the cases these were of the most serious type.

Consequently, 7 442 vehicles were immobilised in 2015, 7 282 in 2016 and 6 706 in 2017. It shall be noted that the high number of infringements reported by the Member States may also be due to their targeted check policy, aiming at identifying and sanctioning the worst performing transport operators in order to maximise the efficiency of the scarce resources available. This implies that the statistics presented might not be wholly representative of the EU market for the transport of dangerous goods, which in practice would be much safer than it may appear from the data reported.

To conclude, the latest reports clearly show a moderate decrease since 2014 in the number of checks. However, this recovery is still lagging behind the numbers for 2014 with 150 348 checks, and is dramatically lower in comparison with 2006 with 244 710 checks or 2007 with 285 466 checks (i.e. the first reference years for which EU27 data are available).

Lastly, as it is in the interest of the Member States to detect and prevent any dangers that may arise in the transport of these goods, the Commission would like to encourage more investment in this field, in particular to improve training of enforcement authorities and the exchange of expertise and best practices.