

Road transport, national and international traffic: maximum dimensions and weights

2000/0060(COD) - 23/03/2000 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to present a proposal for a Directive 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. **CONTENT** : the purpose of this proposal is to harmonise the maximum authorised length and width of buses throughout the European Union. The proposal is in keeping with the object of creating a single market as it will provide for uniform rules to apply to buses throughout the Community. Such rules already apply for the maximum dimensions of lorries and the proposal thus seeks to extend the scope of the Directive 96/53 /EC. This proposal aims to set a harmonised maximum length of 15m for rigid buses and a maximum width of 2.55m. It is also proposed to limit buses over 12m in length to those with 3 or more axles to ensure that the vehicle designs will stay within weight limits and thus do not have negative effects on existing roads. Furthermore, in order to ensure the safety of the vulnerable road users and minimise problems with existing road infrastructure, the proposal lays down requirements limiting their maximum outswing that all buses will have to meet when performing a turning manoeuvre. Finally, the issue of bus+trailer combinations needs to be clarified. The proposal, therefore, explicitly sets a limit of 18.75m for bus and trailer combinations. This corresponds with the maximum permitted length of lorry+trailer combinations. The positive effects of the proposal will be threefold. First, it will simplify the possibilities for cabotage to take place without distortions of competition, with a consequent reduction in passenger transport costs. Secondly, increasing the maximum length of buses in some of the Member States will result in fewer buses being required to transport the same number of passengers. Such an effect, resulting in fewer road journeys, will make public transport more cost-effective and thus more attractive. The proposal is, therefore, both environmentally and economically positive. Thirdly, by setting the standards for manoeuvrability, this will ensure a harmonised level of safety from buses for vulnerable road users throughout the Community.