

International road transport: driving restrictions on heavygoods vehicles on designated roads, weekend bans

1998/0096(COD) - 11/03/1998 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: To harmonise restriction on the use of heavy goods vehicles on Sundays and public holidays.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Directive.

CONTENT: This proposal has been drafted to harmonise restrictions on the use of heavy goods vehicles on Sundays and public holidays. Currently, there are no harmonised rules on driving restriction for heavy goods vehicles, resulting in a situation whereby operators have to take account of differing driving restrictions relating to hours on the road and varying definitions of vehicles exempted from those restrictions. As a result of the excessive interruptions heavy goods vehicles do not make round trips over long distances. The peripheral regions of the Community are highly and disproportionately affected by such driving restrictions.

To summarise, the proposed Directive seeks to establish a transparent system of harmonised rules concerning driving restrictions and applies only to heavy goods vehicles undertaking international journeys. Significantly, the Directive will only apply to certain Community roads and not to national roads. The roads to which the Directive applies are those listed as priority Community roads (TEN-R) under the trans-European transport network and listed in Annex 1 of the Council and European Parliament Decision 1692/96 on Community guidelines for the trans-European network, referred to as “trunk roads”. Specifically speaking, the following provisions constitute the core elements of the proposed Directive:

- Driving restrictions on heavy goods vehicles, which are stricter than those imposed on national transport, may not be imposed on heavy goods vehicles conducting international transport.
- Driving restrictions may be imposed on all heavy good vehicles on Sundays and public holidays between 7.00 and 22.00 in the winter, with longer hours being proposed for the spring/summer months.
- Night time restrictions may be imposed on heavy goods vehicles which do not comply with Community noise emission standards.
- Restrictions may be imposed on heavy good vehicles driving on TEN-R routes in cases where the Member States can prove that the additional restriction can be justified on environmental, safety or social grounds. Other justifiable grounds for imposing further restrictions on trunk roads may include, for example, cases where high traffic is expected during the holiday period or for infrastructure maintenance. The Member States must inform the Commission of any restrictions and back up their case with relevant information.