Basic information

1993/0486(SYN) SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)	Procedure completed
Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification Amended by 2000/0060(COD) Amended by 2013/0105(COD) Amended by 2018/0130(COD) **Subject** 3.20.05 Road transport: passengers and freight 3.40.03 Motor industry, cycle and motorcycle, commercial and agricultural vehicles	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
TRAN Transport and Tourism	WIJSENBEEK Florus A. (ELDR)	26/07/1994

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	1870	1995-09-28
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	1893	1995-12-08
Budget	1945	1996-07-23

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
15/12/1993	Legislative proposal published	COM(1993)0679	Summary
23/02/1994	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
10/10/1994	Vote in committee		Summary
10/10/1994	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A4-0015/1994	
14/11/1994	Debate in Parliament		
26/06/1995	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1995)0193	Summary
08/12/1995	Council position published	11101/3/1995	Summary
18/01/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
22/02/1996	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		Summary
22/02/1996	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A4-0044/1996	

14/03/1996	Debate in Parliament		Summary
14/05/1996	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1996)0208	Summary
23/07/1996	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
23/07/1996	End of procedure in Parliament		
17/09/1996	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1993/0486(SYN)
Procedure type	SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)
Procedure subtype	Codification
Amendments and repeals	Amended by 2000/0060(COD) Amended by 2013/0105(COD) Amended by 2018/0130(COD)
Legal basis	EC Treaty (before Amsterdam) E 075
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	TRAN/4/07381

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A4-0015/1994 OJ C 323 21.11.1994, p. 0005	10/10/1994	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T4-0104/1994 OJ C 341 05.12.1994, p. 0021-0039	15/11/1994	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A4-0044/1996 OJ C 078 18.03.1996, p. 0003	22/02/1996	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T4-0121/1996 OJ C 096 01.04.1996, p. 0221-0233	14/03/1996	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Council position	11101/3/1995 OJ C 356 30.12.1995, p. 0013	08/12/1995	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(1993)0679	15/12/1993	Summary

	OJ C 038 08.02.1994, p. 0003		
Modified legislative proposal	COM(1995)0193 OJ C 247 23.09.1995, p. 0007	26/06/1995	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position	SEC(1996)0037	11/01/1996	Summary
Modified legislative proposal	COM(1996)0208	14/05/1996	Summary
Follow-up document	SWD(2023)0070	24/03/2023	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0755/1994 OJ C 295 22.10.1994, p. 0072	01/06/1994	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Directive 1996/0053
OJ L 235 17.09.1996, p. 0059-0075 Summary

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification

1993/0486(SYN) - 15/12/1993 - Legislative proposal

With a view to making it easier for road haulage operators to undertake cabotage operations, this proposal for a directive sought to extend Council Directive 85/3/EEC on the maximum vehicle weights and dimensions authorised in international traffic to national traffic, by means of changes which would as far as possible mean that most of the national standards currently in force, which varied considerably from one Member State to another, could be met. Directive No 85/3/EEC would be coded and recast as a single text. In concrete terms, the proposal eliminated national differences by applying the definitions of the ISO standards to measure vehicle length, width and overall height. It also made it impossible for a Member State to ban the vehicles of non-resident carriers. It prohibited vehicles from exceeding the overall weights and dimensions set out in the directive (some of those in the proposal were greater than those in Directive 85/3/EEC: maximum width of non-refrigerated vehicles up from 2.5 to 2.55 m; total laden weight of all combined vehicles with environmentally friendly suspension up from 40 to 44 tonnes). But exemptions would be possible if no major implications for international competition were anticipated. A transitional period was envisaged, allowing vehicles currently in service but not meeting the proposed standards to remain in service up to 2001.

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification

1993/0486(SYN) - 01/06/1994 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification

1993/0486(SYN) - 25/07/1996 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: the removal at Community level of obstacles to traffic between Member States which result from differences between standards with regard to the weights and dimensions of commercial road vehicles.

COMMUNITY MEASURE : Council Directive 96/53/EC laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorized dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorized weights in international traffic.

SUBSTANCE : more specifically, the Directive:

- consolidates Directive 85/3/EEC on the weights, dimensions and certain other technical characteristics of certain road vehicles, amended on many occasions, and Directive 86/364/EEC relating to proof of compliance of vehicles with Directive 85/3/EEC;
- increases the maximum authorized length of a road train from 18.35 to 18.75 m, thus increasing from 16 to 16.4 m the maximum distance;
- increases the maximum authorized width of vehicles other than conditioned vehicles from 2.5 to 2.55 m;
- extends to domestic freight transport the rules governing the dimensions laid down for international transport, excluding the maximum authorized height (4 m) which thus remains solely applicable to international transport;
- authorizes Member States to prohibit the use in their territory, during a transitional period expiring on 31 December 1999, of buses exceeding a maximum width of 2.50 m;
- enlarges the current definition of 'thick-walled refrigerated vehicle', such a vehicle now being defined as a 'conditioned vehicle'.

To take account of situations peculiar to certain regions or industrial sectors, Member States may allow vehicles used for goods transport to circulate in their territory with dimensions deviating from those laid down by the Directive where such transport operations do not significantly affect international competition. The Directive exhaustively defines such transport operations.

DATE OF ENTRY INTO FORCE: 17 September 1996

DEADLINE FOR TRANSPOSITION INTO NATIONAL LEGISLATION: 17 September 1997.

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification

1993/0486(SYN) - 26/06/1995 - Modified legislative proposal

The Commission incorporated 5 of the 16 amendments adopted by the European Parliament at first reading and therefore amended its proposal by: - adding a new recital expressing concern for the environment and road safety; - simplifying and extending the definition of an insulated vehicle; - authorizing a longer maximum length for road trains, but only so that simpler couplings can be used.

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification

1993/0486(SYN) - 15/11/1994 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament approved the Commission proposal subject to sixteen amendments. Briefly, the purpose of the amendments adopted is to: - include recitals on promoting combined transport and avoiding empty runs; - draw attention to the distortion of competition in international transport which could be followed by derogations within the Member States to the maximum vehicle dimensions. The Commission accepted this amendment; - replace the term "thick-walled refrigerated vehicle" by "conditioned vehicle" and the minimum thickness of 45 millimetres by an average thickness of 45 millimetres. The Commission accepted this amendment; - call on the Commission to conduct a study, within two years, of the consequences of the directive on countries which may join the Union. The Commission accepted this amendment; - specify that the trailers towed by buses are specifically designed to carry luggage or other facilities associated with bus transport, - increase the maximum length of the road train in point 1.1 of annex I from 18.35m to 18.75m. The Commission accepted this amendment; - replace "movable superstructures and standardised cargo items such as containers" by "movable transport equipment such as containers, mobile boxes and standardised cargo items" as elements included in the dimensions stipulated in annex I, - increase the maximum distance from the loading zone from 16m to 16.40m. The Commission accepted this amendment; - delete the specific provision of the maximum weight for vehicles with a semi-trailer with three axles where the value axle is fitted with twin tyres and pneumatic suspensions or suspensions recognised as equivalent at Community level.

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification

1993/0486(SYN) - 11/01/1996 - Commission communication on Council's position

The Commission approved the common position. However, parts of the Commission proposal still in abeyance would be discussed at a later date.

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification

1993/0486(SYN) - 28/09/1995

The Council agreed by a qualified majority, Austria voting against, on the common position on the proposal for a Council Directive laying down maximum authorised weights and dimensions for road vehicles over 3.5 tonnes circulating within the Community. The aim of the proposal is to eliminate, throughout the Community, barriers to circulation between the Member States resulting from the differences in the standards applicable to the weights and dimensions of road vehicles engaged in road haulage and passenger transport. The common position in particular provides for: - the consolidation of Directive 85/3/EEC, which had been amended a number of times, and Directive 86/364/EEC; - an increase in some of the dimensions laid down in Directive 85/3/EEC, which currently applies only to the international transport of goods and passengers, namely: = increasing the maximum authorised length of a road train from 18.35 m to 18.75 m, = increasing the maximum authorised width of vehicles other than conditioned vehicles from 2.5 m to 2.55 m. Nevertheless, Member States may, during a transitional period due to expire on 31 December 1999, prohibit the use on their territory of buses wider than 2.50 m. It should be noted that the increase in the maximum length (18.75 m) is designed solely to allow the use of non-extensible coupling systems. The increase cannot under any circumstances call into question the loading length of the vehicle, which continues to be set at 15.65 m; - the extension to domestic freight transport of the standards relating to the dimensions laid down for international transport, with the exception of the standard for the maximum authorised height (4.00 m), which therefore remains applicable solely for international transport. However, in order to ensure a reasonable amortisation period for existing vehicles, Member States may allow vehicles exceeding the Directive’s standards for maximum length and width to circulate in their territory in domestic freight transport until 31 December 2006. The common position also contains derogations to take account of the geographical situations and population distributions specific to Finland and Sweden . To this end the text identifies two categories of transport operation deemed to have no significant impact on international competition and that may be carried out, subject to certain conditions, by vehicles with dimensions deviating from those laid down for domestic transport. The text nevertheless provides that a Member State that needs to adapt its road infrastructure in order to be able to comply with the conditions relating to either of these two categories of transport operations may, during a transition period that expires on 31 December 2003, prohibit the circulation in its territory of vehicles exceeding the national standards in force with regard to maximum dimensions in domestic freight transport. The Directive will be implemented one year after its publication in the Official Journal. Once it has been formally adopted, the common position will be forwarded to the European Parliament under the cooperation procedure.

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification

1993/0486(SYN) - 14/03/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

In adopting the report by Mr Florus WIJSENBEEK (ELDR, NL), the European Parliament approved the common position of the Council on the weights and dimensions of trucks whilst maintaining two amendments concerning: - the need to incorporate certain additional elements in the directive (pneumatic suspension to prevent excessive road damage, maximum axle loads, and vehicles to be capable of turning through 360 degrees); - and the possibility of granting exemptions up to 31 December 2006. Before the end of the transitional period, the Commission shall present a report on any possible exemptions after 31 December 2006 and, if necessary, put forward proposals

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification

1993/0486(SYN) - 08/12/1995 - Council position

The common position of the Council incorporates the five amendments adopted by the European Parliament at its first reading and accepted by the Commission in its amended proposal. These amendments concern: - a restatement of environmental and road safety concerns; - a change of definition of what constitutes a 'conditioned vehicle'; - a longer maximum length of 18.75 m for road trains, but only to permit simpler coupling mechanisms. It must be noted that the common position adopted in the Council has a more limited scope than the initial proposal: harmonization of the maximum length and width of all freight vehicle combinations, and only international harmonization of the height of freight vehicles. In addition, the Council introduced the following substantive changes to the Commission proposal: - the possibility for Member States to require that conditioned vehicles be accompanied by a document or ATP certification plate as evidence of the vehicle's quality of insulation; - to allow for particular situations in certain regions or industrial sectors, a Member State may permit vehicles used for goods transport to deviate from the dimensions laid down in the directive where such transport does not significantly affect international competition in the transport sector; - Member States which have to adapt their road infrastructure in order to be able to permit the modular concept may prohibit until 31 December 2003 at the latest the circulation in its territory, in national goods transport operations, of vehicles which exceed current national standards on dimensions provided that national legislation continues to apply to all Community carriers in a non-discriminatory manner; - vehicles used for goods transport and registered before the implementation of this directive may continue to be used nationally until 31 December 2006; -buses and coaches are exempt from all aspects of national harmonization, thus double deck buses and 15 m coaches can continue as at present. The maximum width of passenger vehicles on international journeys will be increased to 2.55 m, but from 1 January 1999.

Road vehicles: maximum weights and dimensions (repeal. Directive 83/3 /EEC). Codification

1993/0486(SYN) - 14/05/1996 - Modified legislative proposal

The Commission's amended proposal does not incorporate the European Parliament's amendments seeking to obtain additional derogations in that it considers that granting derogations beyond 2006 would compromise the objective of harmonization and put manufacturers who had adjusted their production lines in order to comply with the directive at a disadvantage. However, it does incorporate the European Parliament's amendment seeking to introduce a number of additional elements in the directive with regard to licensing and using vehicles (pneumatic suspension to prevent excessive road damage, maximum axle loads and vehicles to be capable of turning through 360 degrees).