

Cefic position on the revision of the Weight and Dimensions Directive

The European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) regards the revision of the Weights and Dimensions Directive as an important step to reduce emissions in both road-only and combined transport. At the same time, the revision needs to ensure the harmonisation of heavy-duty road freight rules and improve efficiency by removing the regulatory barriers to cross-border transport. Ensuring efficient operations and technology-neutral incentives for lower-emission solutions is essential.

Therefore, Cefic requests that special attention be given to the following points:

- 1. Urgent regulatory action is needed to optimise vehicle utilisation and realise emission reductions.** Increasing the maximum weights and dimension where road infrastructure allows for it, and removing regulatory barriers to cross-border transport, will have a substantial positive effect on driver and truck utilisation, energy efficiency and emissions reduction. Cefic therefore calls for allowing vehicle weights of at least 44 tonnes where infrastructurally possible, increasing maximum height to 4.3m for specific container types allowing for more modal-shift options, and extending truck lengths by +1.38m to allow new green technology and shuttle services. Also, the use of the European Modular System (EMS) should be supported wherever economic and environmental benefits can be demonstrated, while respecting safety compliancy.
- 2. Intermodal transport operations should be encouraged by allowing higher maximum weights compared to road-only transport.** Intermodal operations require additional handling steps, and therefore generate extra operational costs when transferring cargo between road, rail or inland waterways. Considering the higher weight allowances typical for rail and waterborne transport, it is important to allow an additional 4 tonnes for intermodal transport (48 tonnes for 5- and 6-axle vehicles). This measure will incentivise the shift to rail or inland waterways, while increasing the energy efficiency and cost-effectiveness of intermodal operations.
- 3. The use of alternative fuels and technologies should also be incentivised,** i.e. compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied natural gas (LNG), electrofuels (e-fuels) and biofuels. The draft Directive refers only to zero-emission vehicles (battery-electric and hydrogen). For the chemical industry, especially for the transport of dangerous goods, zero-emission vehicles are often not a viable option due to safety reasons. Cefic therefore advocates for a gradual and realistic approach, in line with the CO₂ standards for trucks, in which alternative fuels and technologies play a key role in achieving the emission reduction goals whilst ensuring safe transport of our goods. We request that these alternative technologies benefit from higher weigh allowances (+4 tonnes for 5- and 6 axle vehicles) in both national and cross-border transport rules. To ensure meaningful climate impact, emission-reduction performance should be assessed on the well-to-wheel emission intensity of the truck, as defined in the CountEmissions EU proposal.

4. **It is important that Member States authorise cross-border transport operations involving heavier, longer, or taller vehicles when these configurations are already permitted in their neighbouring countries' in national traffic.** National authorities can designate specific road segments where infrastructure cannot safely handle heavier weights or longer/higher trucks. However, authorities stopping compliant vehicles at the border where no such infrastructural constraints exist leads to operational inefficiencies and creates a competitive disadvantage for cross-border transport compared with national operations. It results in additional truck traffic, higher logistical costs, and increased emissions in each affected Member State.
5. **Harmonised implementation of the electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) Platforms is to be ensured.** Cefic fully supports the ambition to deploy eFTI platforms across the EU. However, this requirement can only be effectively implemented once all Member States have completed the technical and functional setup under the eFTI Regulation, and once at least 10 eFTI platform service providers are available to economic operators. The mandatory utilisation of eFTI platforms rather belongs in the Combined Transport Directive.
6. **The implementation timeline should be ambitious.** Cefic calls for the cross-border harmonisation provisions to be transposed into national legislation within one year following the entry into force of the revised Weights and Dimension Directive. A timely implementation is essential to ensure legal certainty for operators, accelerate emission-reduction benefits, and avoid further fragmentation of the Single Market.

Conclusion

Cefic welcomes the proposal's objectives to reduce operational and administrative burdens for road operators, to strengthen the single market to enhance EU industry competitiveness, and incentivise emission reduction in road transport. However, Cefic encourages to re-evaluate the provisions linked with zero-emission vehicles by including the emission-reduction potential of alternative technologies and fuels. This review should also ensure coherent links with relevant legislative acts.

Next to this, careful attention is needed to address cross-border issues that hamper competitiveness and lead to energy and operational inefficiencies. Clear incentives should also be included to continue supporting intermodal transport.

Finally, Cefic kindly calls upon the Member States to implement the Directive's measures, including the eFTI system, as early as possible.

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About Cefic

Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council, is the forum of large, medium and small chemical companies across Europe, accounting for 1.2 million jobs and 13% of world chemicals production.

On behalf of its members, Cefic's experts share industry insights and trends, and offer views and input to the EU agenda. Cefic also provides members with services, like guidance and trainings on regulatory and technical matters, while also contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge.