

## Weights and dimensions of trucks and buses

Heavy-goods vehicles and buses circulating within the European Union must comply with certain rules regarding their weight, height, width and length, in accordance with the Weights and Dimensions Directive. The revision of the current Directive aims at improving road safety, energy efficiency and the environmental performance of road transport through greener and safer trucks.

### Background

Trucks, buses and coaches produce about a quarter of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from road transport in the EU and some 5% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions. The current Weights and Dimensions Directive ([96/53/EC](#)) was established with the objective of protecting infrastructure, and ensuring road safety and free competition within the Single Market. It limits the maximum weight of heavy-goods vehicles to 40 tonnes (44 in combined transport, e.g. by rail and water) and their length to 18.75 metres in international traffic.

Under certain conditions Member States may allow the use of longer and heavier vehicles (LHVs) – so-called mega trucks – but only for traffic on their national territory. The impact of these LHVs on road safety, the environment and infrastructure has been the issue of significant [debate](#), including on the question of whether cross-border traffic of LHVs is compatible with the Weights and Dimensions Directive.

### Proposed revision

In April 2013 the [Commission proposed](#) a revision of the Directive to adapt its rules to European environmental policy objectives and to allow truck design to keep pace with technological progress. Inter alia, the proposal would make cross-border use of LHVs lawful for journeys crossing a border if each of the two bordering Member States allows such vehicles on national territory.

In April 2014, the European Parliament adopted at first reading its [position](#) (rapporteur Jörg Leichtfried, S&D, Austria) on the proposal. In December 2014, after [interinstitutional negotiations](#), a trilogue [agreement](#) was reached, and this was approved by the Committee on Transport and Tourism on 24 February 2015. This compromise has now to be voted in plenary.

### Trilogue agreement

During the negotiations both the Parliament and Council rejected the new provision concerning cross-border traffic of LHVs. Accordingly the current state of play will not change.

Vehicles equipped with environmentally friendly power engines, like electric motors, may exceed the **maximum weight** if these technologies need the extra weight. The maximum weight of buses will be increased by up to 1.5 tonnes to accommodate the changed average weight of passengers and their luggage.

To promote combined (road and train or ship) transport, the **maximum length** of vehicles may increase by 15 cm so that the larger, most used, long-distance containers can be transported.

**Length derogations** will be granted to allow for **better truck aerodynamics**. This will enable retractable or foldable flaps to be attached on the back. At the front, truck cabs may be designed in a rounded shape which will improve energy efficiency, and increase security by reducing blind spots. The larger crumple zone of a round nose will also improve the truck driver's safety. Vehicles with the new features will have to be type-approved before they can be put on the market. The Commission has to propose the necessary changes to the current type-approval rules; provisions for these new designs will only start to apply three years after the adoption of the revised rules.

Inspection authorities will be enabled to **better detect overloaded vehicles** by automatic weighing systems on roads or by means of on-board weighing equipment. On-board data would also be available to the driver.