

**Question for written answer E-002583/2016  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Hannu Takkula (ALDE)**

Subject: Assessment of the impact of the regulation concerning driving hours and rest periods in various regions

According to the regulation governing driving hours and rest periods of HGV drivers, it is not permitted to drive for more than 9 hours in any period of 24. In addition, a break of at least 45 minutes must be taken after 4.5 hours. Particularly in peripheral regions of the European Union and in Member States where long distances have to be travelled within a single country, driving hours and rest periods affect the way in which professional drivers use their time and the opportunities that they have for leisure. Climatic conditions vary greatly within the EU, which gives rise to regional challenges in applying the regulation on driving hours and rest periods. Particularly in snowy regions, such as Northern Finland, there are very few safe resting places in winter.

The application of the current regulation governing driving hours and rest periods has caused problems to transport operators operating in snowy regions as regards finding suitable resting places, which has been reflected in contraventions of the rules on driving hours and rest periods. Average speeds have presumably also risen. On the other hand, the strict requirements regarding rest periods have negative effects on the family lives and social relationships of people living in peripheral regions. Because of the strict requirements concerning rest periods, professional drivers who drive long distances are often compelled to spend the night away from home.

Has the Commission performed regional surveys of the impact of the regulation governing driving hours and rest periods on road safety and the wellbeing of drivers, or does it intend to perform such surveys? Will the Commission propose regional flexibility in the application of the regulation governing driving hours and rest periods in regions where the climate and distances are exceptional?