Council Directive 96/53/EC (the Directive) established a common legal framework for the maximum admissible dimensions both, in national and in international transport. The objective of harmonising the standards for maximum dimensions was indeed to eliminate barriers among Member States and to ensure fair conditions of competition.

The Directive provides some derogations to respond to the particular needs of certain regions and local industry, such as the forestry industry, under the premise that it would not significantly affect international competition. This situation could also appear in bordering regions and bilateral agreements have been adopted to allow the circulation of heavy-duty vehicles that exceed the dimensions set up in the Directive between neighbouring countries.

As indicated in our previous reply to parliamentary Question E-005004/2021, the sustainable and smart mobility strategy announced the revision of the Directive. The possible legislative proposal is expected to be adopted by the Commission in the first quarter of 2023. It will be supported by an evaluation and an impact assessment. In the REPowerEU Communication of 18 May 2022, the Commission announced that within this revision, it will boost the energy-savings potential of longer and heavier trucks to drive cross-border within the European Union. Within the revision of the CO₂ performance standards for newly sold heavy-duty vehicle, due before the end of this year, the Commission will look at further eco-design requirements or higher energy efficiency targets for vehicles and trailers.

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