



EU POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2024 - 2029

THE COMMON ROAD TRANSPORT OFFICE
IN BRUSSELS
BGL, FNTR AND NLA

Road transport companies play a key role in the EU freight transport network and logistics chain. We generate growth by ensuring that supply chains of freight are running smoothly and thereby our sector binds together the European economies. BGL, FNTR and NLA represent more than 25.000 road transport companies most of which are SME's and together we employ more than 650.000 employees in Germany, France, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. As the demand for freight transport in Europe is expected to grow in the coming decades, it is essential to ensure:

- that future EU policies support the road transport sector to become a part of the solution in addressing the challenges created by climate change.
- even enforcement of the EU rules for a competitive and fair road transport in Europe.

With this paper we put forward our recommendations for the next European Parliament and European Commission for the 2024 – 2029 mandate.

I. EUROPEAN CHALLENGES FOR THE YEARS TO COME

Insufficient enforcement of the Mobility Package (MP)

With the adoption of the Mobility Package, the EU has laid the groundwork for ensuring fair competition between road haulage operators and better working conditions for professional drivers in Europe. It is now important that cabotage, driving and rest time and posting rules are evenly and efficiently enforced across the EU. This is not least instrumental to attract new talents to the profession. Furthermore, ongoing EU enlargement negotiations should not undermine the integrity of the internal market and jeopardise the achievements of the MP. New EU Member States must fully accept the European acquis of the transport chapter including all social aspects and foresee transitional measures for cabotage operations.

Pragmatic green transition of the road freight sector

We fully support the green transition of the transport sector. In a competitive market with high consumer demand, EU-policies must incentivise all actors to play a role, as road transport companies cannot alone bear the costs of making a transition to greener technologies. Moreover, we need to remove regulatory, administrative and technical barriers and promote enabling conditions by reinvesting the CO₂-revenues generated by the road freight sector for incentives and subsidies for companies who want to invest in green solutions. We also note that the strong focus on battery electric technologies for heavy-duty vehicles creates a heavy demand for adequate and stable power supply of green electricity. In the next five years the EU and EU Member States must focus on ensuing capacity of the energy grid and stable supply of electricity to the public charging stations, the charging facilities at the customers terminals and road transport companies home charging facilities.

Moreover, it is important that technology neutrality remains a guiding principle in EU climate policy. We need to be open towards all types of renewable fuels that can contribute to lowering CO₂ emissions. The sector needs support with the necessary information and knowledge to make investment decisions that are consistent with the “Fit for 55” and EU objectives of 90% of zero emission heavy-duty vehicles by 2040. Hauliers must cope with uncertainties related to availability of investments and the development of charging and refuelling infrastructure.

The haulage industry needs a credible foundation and framework to be able to calculate business cases and finance a viable conversion from diesel to zero-emission vehicles. Therefore, it is time for a legislative break after the many initiatives that have followed the Green Deal and focus should now be on efficient implementation of the Fit for 55 Package.

Tackle the shortage of drivers

In 2023, 233,000 truck driver positions remained unfilled in Europe according to the latest IRU driver shortage study. This figure is expected to worsen until 2028 and reach 745,000 unfilled positions. Today, the average age of drivers in Europe is 47, and more than 1/3 are over 55. Therefore, the quality of jobs must increase to attract a more diverse workforce. To this end we need to ensure high quality of training giving drivers the competences they need for the future. Developing career prospects, supporting professional transitions and long careers and providing more safe and secure parking areas in Europe also needs to be promoted. As part of that we also need to ensure that third country professional drivers and others are fully compliant with the Mobility Package rules also in terms of pay.

New technologies and digitalisation present challenges and opportunities

Digitalisation can help our sector and authorities to better control and enforce EU legislation, remove paperwork obstacles to mobility and facilitate access to cities. However, ownership of data and cybersecurity in turn presents challenges for our member companies. We therefore call on the European Commission and European Parliament to strike the right balance, whereby hauliers are in control of the data they generate with their vehicles and whether such data is shared with third parties.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2024-2029

1. A competitive European road transport industry

- Ensure fair competition with respect to social aspects and market access rules via more efficient enforcement and controls of the MP across the EU.
- An EU road transport agency, notably to ensure efficient enforcement of the MP.
- Better dissemination of information about the rules of the MP for all actors: transport clients, freight forwarders, hauliers and drivers.
- An EU single window with a calculator to make it easier to calculate payslips for posted drivers across the EU.
- EU wide harmonised digital procedure for the application of A1 certificates for employees posted to an EU Member State.
- Automatic transmission of border crossings by the smart tachograph to the Internal Market Information System (IMI) for better enforcement of the MP.

2. An attractive driver profession

- A revision of the professional driver training directive with more focus on company training and e-learning. This should include allowing for third country drivers with sufficient training and experience to access more easily the EU labour market.
- More safe and secure parking areas in Europe that are well maintained and have proper sanitary facilities improving the quality of the daily life for drivers in Europe.

3. A more realistic and pragmatic European energy transition

- A dedicated EU fund to help finance the green transition of the transport sector.
- More reinvestment of CO2 revenues generated by the road freight sector to promote investments in the green transition of the transport sector.
- Close monitoring of progress with enabling conditions, such as roll out of infrastructure for alternative fuels (AFIR Regulation), capacity on the grid and market uptake of zero emission vehicles.
- Giving renewable fuels a more prominent role in the decarbonisation process in the short term and for special applications within the logistic sector. In this perspective, the 2027 review of the CO2 emissions regulation for new heavy-duty vehicles (HDV's) has to be used to assess whether a Carbon Correction Factor and the full lifecycle of CO2 emissions of the new HDV's should lead to adapted targets.

4. Greening freight through increased weights and dimensions

- We call for 44 tonnes cross-border between consenting EU Member States, which will bring more operational efficiency, notably carrying an additional capacity of 10%.
- We also encourage circulation of European Modular System (EMS) combinations as well as high cross border transports between consenting countries of capacity vehicles combinations with higher weights and dimensions that fall outside the scope of EMS.
- Additional weight of Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) due to the extra weight of the batteries needs to be compensated to incentivise the uptake of ZEV and to avoid the loss of payload.
- The reform of the rules of combined transport operations must not lead to more administrative burdens.

5. Urban access policies that work for industry

- More coordination between urban areas is needed to end patchwork of different rules and legislation for accessing city centres.
- Priority must be put to address lack of infrastructures (e.g. missing multimodal hubs next to the cities), congestion (absence of management of mobility flows), and notably parking restrictions for road transport operators delivering in city centres.
- Moreover, the Directive on cross-border exchange of information on road safety related traffic offences should include access to low emission zones and parking fines in its scope, to ensure level playing field when operators do not comply with local regulations.

6. New technologies and digital investments

- We call for improvement to support operators when planning itineraries for the transport of goods, regarding the deployments of charging stations, or about infrastructures and services.
- With a huge potential on digital transformation, access to data, there is a need for road haulage operators to reskill and upskill their workforce.
- Ownership of the data of road transport companies must be respected and the user's choice over third-party access to data should be preserved.

7. EU enlargement with gradual access for road transport operators

- To prepare EU accession to new Member States, access to the market for road transport operators must be gradual.
- It is essential for the hauliers to ensure, from now on, that enlargement does not lead to trade shocks and distortions of competition in the European internal market.
- Concerning the cabotage rules, we call for a transition period with a full restriction over several years.

About the Common Road Transport Office in Brussels



NLA, Nordic Logistics Association is the joint Brussels representation of the leading road haulage associations in the Nordics representing around 14,000 member companies in; Denmark: Dansk Transport og Logistik (DTL); Sweden: Sveriges Åkeriföretag (SÅ) and Norway: Norges Lastebileier-Forbund (NLF) in close cooperation with its associated member Finnish Transport and Logistics (SKAL).



BGL, Bundesverband Güterkraftverkehr Logistik und Entsorgung e.V. is the leading association of road haulage, logistics and disposal in Germany with 7,000 member companies.



FNTR, Fédération Nationale des Transports Routiers is the leading association of road haulage in France with 5,300 member companies.