

## Road transportation

### CEPI supports an increase of the authorised weight for trucks to 44 tonnes

*Triggered by the paper industry, around 250 million tonnes of raw materials and finished products are yearly transported across Europe and this figure has gradually increased along with the economic growth, the production, consumption and trade of paper and board. External logistics costs average 10% of turnover. Road is the main mode of transport and will most probably remain in the coming years. The European pulp and paper industry, like many other industry sectors, is severely impacted by weight limitations transport since it carries mainly heavy goods.*

Under the current EU legislation<sup>1</sup>, the limits to truck weight and dimensions are set at 40 tonnes and 18.75 meter of length, with the exception of intermodal transport where a maximum of 44 tonnes is permitted in a range of 150 km. However, individual Member States can allow higher weight limits on their roads.

Some countries like France, Germany and Spain apply a 40 tonnes limit for road transport and 44 tonnes limit for intermodal transport. But some others have allowed 44 tonnes for all transports - Belgium, Italy, Luxemburg or United Kingdom - and even higher weight limits - 48-50 tonnes in Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and 60 tonnes in Finland and Sweden for a long time.

**Transport costs have constantly increased over the years** because of rising fuel price, road charging and lack of available capacity (trucks and skilled drivers). **Further cost increases are expected** in the coming years due to further internalisation of external costs, rising road charging and stricter minimum safety standards.

Regarding international transport, **European industry is often limited by the lowest authorised vehicle weight** in the Member States travelled across, resulting in a sub-optimal utilisation of the available truck capacities around Europe.

**CEPI supports an increase of the authorised weights for one-compartment articulated vehicles in international traffic to a minimum of 44 tonnes for road transport (with 5 axles) and 50 tonnes for intermodal transport (with 6 axles).** CEPI has also called for a wider use of the **European Modular System**<sup>2</sup> for road transport to face the inevitable road transport growth and provide more opportunities for intermodal transport without negative impact on road safety and infrastructure.

<sup>1</sup> Directive 96/53/EC

<sup>2</sup> See the CEPI position paper: "The need for higher capacity and longer trucks". More information is available on request.



An increase in the authorised weight limits would decrease the number of freight journeys and trucks on the road and would reduce congestion. It would constitute a solution to the shortage of skilled drivers the transport industry has experienced for many years. This would contribute to **lower costs and improved competitiveness but also lower fuel consumption and emissions**<sup>3</sup> without deteriorating the infrastructure (road wear and bridges) or reducing road safety as shown in the EU countries that have adopted higher weight limits. It would not lead to any significant reverse modal shift, since a weight difference is maintained between road transport and intermodal transport.

**Competitiveness and sustainability should be the key objectives when considering the review of the Directive 96/53/EC.** It should aim at higher efficiency of the road transport to the benefit of the industry and the whole society by **keeping our economy moving and enhancing the functioning of the internal market.**

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**The European pulp and paper industry key figures:**

- It is composed of 780 companies and 1,150 mills
- It has a turnover of 80 billion Euro and a value added of 21 billion Euro
- It employs some 250,000 people directly and provides indirect employment to some 1.8 million people
- It produces some 102 million tonnes of paper and 43 million tonnes of pulp
- It represents 27% of the world production
- It exports 17 million tonnes of paper, around 17% of its production
- Some 56% of the paper and board consumed is recycled
- It is part of the Forest-Based Industries, which has a turnover of 375 billion euros, i.e. 6.5% of the European manufacturing industry's turnover

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<sup>3</sup> A study from the Logistics Research Centre (UK) showed more than 100,000 tonnes of CO2 saved by increasing weight limits to 44 tonnes and 134 million less vehicle-kms. A study from the Comité National Routier (CNR) (France) showed that 224,000 tonnes of CO2 would be saved with a reduction of 395 million vehicle-kms (6,490 fewer trucks) if the weight limit in France would be increased to 44 tonnes. This would result in a decrease of the transport costs between 9.1 and 11.6% for heavy goods transports (estimation CNR).