

Road transport stakeholders call on EU to promote freight transport efficiency

Exploring “Efficiency in road transport” at the 62nd IAA International Motor Show for Commercial Vehicles, the road transport industry stressed the need to allow cross-border circulation of longer heavier vehicles - Modular Concept - on a European scale, as it increases transport efficiency and positively affects both the environment and road safety, creating better rather than more transport.

Hanover –The [International Road Transport Union](#) (IRU), the [European Automobile Manufacturers’ Association](#) (ACEA) and the [German Association of the Automotive Industry](#) (VDA) today staged a joint international symposium on “Efficiency in Road Transport” in the framework of the 62nd IAA Commercial Vehicles, highlighting that in today’s globalised economy, road transport has become a vital production tool due to its high quality door-to-door services.

The symposium concluded that the use of longer heavier vehicles (LHVs) – the so-called Modular Concept -, coupled with innovative logistics strategies, represents the most appropriate answer from the road transport industry to effectively absorb the foreseen continued growth of freight transport in Europe and to promote the principle of co-modality, as advocated in the EU transport policy guidelines of the White Paper.

A recent study commissioned by the European Commission* has shown that the use of longer truck combinations, by achieving greater volume capacity per vehicle, would increase fuel and transport efficiency, reduce transport costs and have positive effects on road safety and the environment; the annual CO₂ savings would amount to at least 5 million tonnes. The study concludes that “introducing LHVs is overall beneficial for the European society.”

IRU President, Janusz Lacny, said, “Modular Concept must be implemented as it provides better rather than more transport, by increasing road transport’s efficiency and promoting co-modality. However, harmonisation and standardisation of transport units, loading equipment and terminals are key to ensure successful implementation and optimal use of European Modular Concept as a means to promote multimodal interoperability of transport units and guarantee intra- and inter-modal compatibility of vehicles.”

Ivan Hodac, Secretary General of ACEA, added: “Further promotion of the use of the modular concept throughout Europe would have an immediate positive effect on transport efficiency, road safety and the environment. It would also ensure an increased drive towards intermodal road-rail transport solutions. Greater transport efficiency is needed to keep Europe moving.”

VDA President Matthias Wissmann underlined: “Field tests in Germany have shown that fuel consumption can be reduced by 15 to 30 percent per ton transported when using longer vehicle combinations. Furthermore, they also provide an interesting option to make combined transport more attractive as the road transport part would become

more efficient so that overall transport costs for combined transport could be reduced. In order to cope with future transport growth, all modes will be needed and all modes should be made as efficient as possible.”

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* Effects of adapting the rules on weight and dimensions of heavy commercial vehicles as established within Directive 96/53/EC, DG TREN, July 2008.

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Through its global network of 180 national Member Associations in 74 countries, the IRU upholds the interests of the entire road transport industry. In today's globalised economy, road transport has become a vital tool for production and the sustainable mobility of people. Any penalty on road transport is an even greater penalty on the economy as a whole. By providing expert information and recommendations to intergovernmental bodies and national governments through its membership on the 5 continents, the IRU guarantees informed legislation to achieve sustainable economic, social and environmental progress.

The ACEA members are BMW Group, DAF Trucks, Daimler, FIAT, Ford of Europe, General Motors Europe, Jaguar Land Rover, MAN Nutzfahrzeuge, Porsche, PSA Peugeot Citroën, Renault, Scania, Toyota Motor Europe, Volkswagen and Volvo. The European automobile industry is key to the EU economy. The sector employs 2.3 million people directly and indirectly supports the jobs of another 10 million families. The industry is the largest private investor in research & development in the EU. with R&D expenditure of 20 billion euro annually.

The German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA) consists of about 600 member companies and promotes nationally and internationally the interests of the entire German automotive industry. It can bank on a strong power base of members consisting of automobile manufacturers, suppliers and manufacturers of trailers, special bodies and containers. In the interest of all its members, the VDA is active in all areas of the motor traffic industry like economic, environmental and transport policy, technical legislation, quality assurance and taxation. The VDA is also the organizer of international motor shows for passenger cars and commercial vehicles.

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