

NO MEGA TRUCKS

„What is the position of the EU-Commission on a Europe-wide admission of mega trucks?“

Interview with Antonio Tajani, EU Commissioner for Transport

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Mr Tajani, on January 22, 2009, the German journal Deutsche Verkehrs-Zeitung (DVZ) reported under the headline 'No EU License for 25m HGV', that you had spoken out against Gigaliners (see enclosure). Is this true? Do you oppose longer HGVs?

Last year, my services commissioned a study aiming at assessing the effects of the possible introduction of commercial freight vehicles which would be longer and heavier than presently allowed by Directive 96/53/EC which governs this domain.

The results of this study, which have been made available in January 2009, and the reactions they raised (positive and negative) indicate that we dispose today of a limited knowledge of the issue.

Given this uncertainty, I can at present not support any change in the legislation in order to allow a general use of these vehicles.

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In addition, it is said that the EU Commission wants to authorise bilateral agreements between member states allowing Gigaliners. Is this a new strategy by the EU Commission after originally considering their EU-wide introduction?

Some Member States accept the use of these vehicles within their national borders (as allowed under certain conditions by Directive 96/53/EC). However, the analysis of the legislation in force by our legal experts excludes the possibility of reading Directive 96/53/EC as allowing their cross-border use. The idea of bilateral agreements between Member States on such a question contradicts the idea of the Single Market and raises also questions about a possible distortion of competition.

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What are the next definite steps in the political process?

We need to improve our knowledge of these vehicles before we can consider changing current legislation. Our Joint Research Centre in Sevilla, Spain, is improving the economic model that served as the basis for the study on longer and heavier commercial vehicles I mentioned earlier. The Centre will also be performing new and more detailed analyses and the results will then be discussed at a stakeholders' workshop this spring. The results will also be used to decide the terms of reference of

another study we would like to launch, which will cover more technical questions about these Longer and Heavier Vehicles – LHVs.

It is unlikely that before 2010 at the earliest the Commission will have enough data to consider whether or not revising Directive 96/53/EC.

The interview was held by Martin Roggermann, coordinator of the Europe-wide Campaign “NO MEGA TRUCKS” in March 2009, it was published on 10 March 2009 on www.nomegatrucks.eu. The interview in German and English language is authorised by the European Commission.