

opinion

Opinion of the German Trade Union Confederation (Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund, DGB) on the European Commission's "Europe on the Move" package in the transport sector

Improving working conditions in European road transport

In brief

30.08.2017

- The DGB calls on the Commission to strengthen Europe's social dimension and to put an end to unsustainable conditions in the road transport sector – such as wage dumping, kilometre-based remuneration, and drivers having to spend their rest and waiting periods in their vehicles for months – rather than continuing to focus on liberalising the transport sector at the expense of workers.
- Opening up the Directive on the posting of workers to sectoral exceptions in international transport operations is totally unacceptable. The Directive's safeguards must apply to all posted workers. No sector or group of workers should be exempted from this. The application of the minimum wage to international freight transport is in conformity with European law.
- A binding and uniform basis of remuneration that calculates the same wages indiscriminately for each driving operation on the basis of the applicable regulations and in compliance with the favourability principle of the host country would be simpler, more transparent and minimise the risk of abuse.
- The DGB calls for monitoring and enforcement of the existing rules rather than adapting them to the wrong practice (cabotage, rest periods) or delaying their application by three days (posting).
- The upper limit for cabotage operations must be maintained. The DGB also opposes allowing unlimited cabotage in contiguous Member States.
- The DGB rejects making driving times and rest periods more flexible in the interests of undertakings. It should be the norm for drivers to spend their regular weekly rest period at home.
- The DGB calls for the same rules to apply to all journeys with international participation, whether cabotage, combined or cross-border services. All regulations in the mobility package must also apply to minibuses and light-duty vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes.
- Letterbox companies must be combated more robustly. Therefore, the DGB supports a Europe-wide risk rating system for conspicuous companies. Licensing requirements must be tightened up.
- The DGB calls for new trucks to be equipped with state-of-the-art technology and for smart tachographs to be installed in all vehicles involved in international transport from 2020

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onwards. Companies that are found to be in breach of the rules must be obliged to install digital tachographs without delay.

- The control authorities must be given more staff in line with the increase in cross-border journeys.
- The DGB calls for the establishment of a European Road Transport Agency to strengthen the rights of employees.
- The DGB takes a critical view of the planned single European Electronic Toll Service (EETS) due to concerns about consumer and data protection.
- The DGB calls for more investment in a cross-border connected mobility infrastructure, including infrastructure for alternative fuels, digital infrastructure and the physical transport network. One of the priorities must be the development of transitions between modes of transport in order to seize every opportunity to shift traffic to railways and inland waterways.
- For the DGB, the polluter pays principle is an important lever for low-emission mobility. However, the conversion to full user financing by means of passenger car toll is rejected as being socially unfair and not appropriate in terms of transport policy. The same applies to congestion charges that penalise private road users.
- The DGB considers the monitoring of carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from trucks, buses and coaches to be a necessary step towards increasing the competitiveness of European manufacturers, improved energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions, but also calls for a regular review of employment.