

Guiding Principles Paper

Brussels, 18 February 2022

CER GUIDING PRINCIPLES for the REVISION of the Weights & Dimensions Directive

Road Vehicles Weights & Dimensions

Proposed CER Guiding Principles for the Revision of the Directive

In 2008, the world reached the peak of conventional oil production (IEA – 2018 World Energy Outlook). It is now estimated that the peak of absolute oil production has already been reached or is on the verge to be reached this year. CO2 emission is therefore not the only challenge we will have to face in the coming decades. **Energy shortage will in fact become the most immediate challenge for the transport sector** and the industry at large as from this year as rapid decrease of oil output will not be fully compensated by the take up of renewable energies neither in the short nor medium term.

Rail is 7 times more energy-efficient than road. Competition between modes is therefore no more an option. Cooperation, coordination and solidarity between modes will be the way forward if we want to be able to transport the same amount of goods with less energy. Innovation promoting competition between modes should give the way to innovation that allow modes to complement each other.

With this in mind, rail is willing to continue to give a hand to road. For now 3 decades, **railways have innovated to accommodate trucks, trailers, containers and swap-bodies**, by creating new types of wagons (e.g.: pocket wagons) and new transshipment technics (horizontal).

These investments are capital-intensive and can only be amortised over long periods (beyond 30 years), whereas trucks&trailers write-off periods are closer to 10 years. **It is therefore essential that road now makes a step towards rail.** While improving the intrinsic performance of road transport, truck manufacturers must make sure that any truck-trailer coming out of the manufacturing line are compatible with rail, as rail-based multimodal transport chains are undeniably the most efficient way to save energy overall. Their use will also have to be carefully organised. Therefore it is paramount..

1.	That Public authorities set strict rules on the type of road vehicles that are allowed on the European market, in terms of weights, dimensions, derogations to dimensions (e.g. protruding devices), shapes, designs, resistance to air pressure, to make sure that they are compatible with rail transport and promote rail-road interoperability.
2.	That Public Authorities set strict rules on the characteristic needed for such vehicles to be transferred easily , quickly and cost-efficiently on and off wagons (promoting operational agility & compatibility between modes). These should include a cranability requirement.
3.	That rules are set on road vehicles combinations to be allowed on the market in order to optimise the use of both trucks and wagons capacity (certain trailers dimensions indeed do not allow to optimize wagon capacity).
4.	That rules are set on the usage of certain combinations. For example, modular trucks should not be used outside intermodal operations . Conversely, if used for intermodal operations, they may optimise the transport chain. If used for long-distance road transport, they may simply cannibalise more energy-efficient rail-based transport chains: intermodal transport (of which combined transport), single wagonload and full-train business. See Fraunhofer Institute 2011 Study on the

	"Effects of the Introduction of LHVs on Combined Road-Rail Transport and Single Wagonload Rail Freight Traffic" available here: https://www.cer.be/publications/brochures-studies-and-reports/study-effects-introduction-lhvs-combined-road-rail .
5.	Lastly, in the age of multimodality, the Weights & Dimensions Directive is no more to be considered a mere road directive. It is a directive for all modes, because it is of concern to all modes. Its revision must be conducted hand-in-hand with the revision of the whole multimodal framework of which the revision of the Combined Transport Directive is the 2nd pillar. See CER Position on the Combined Transport IIA of September 2021 on: http://cer.be/publications/latest-publications/cer-position-revision-combined-transport-directive .

About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 79% of the rail network length, 77% of the rail freight business and about 90% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policy makers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow us on Twitter [@CER_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cer).

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