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PRESS RELEASE

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High Level Group report recommends gradual opening of EU road haulage market

Gradual opening of domestic road transport markets should be considered as a key step towards completing the Single European Transport Area says a report handed over to Vice-President Kallas today. In June 2011, a High Level Group of academics was mandated to draft a report on the situation of the EU road haulage market. The High Level Group considers that allowing a step-by-step opening of the market will increase the flexibility of operations and competition in national markets, whilst ensuring fair competition and maintaining adequate social norms. The Commission will take into consideration these conclusions in its own report on the situation of the EU road haulage market, to be published in 2013.

"This report serves as a very useful basis for reflection and will feed into the Commission's on-going work on the analysis of the situation of the EU road transport market", said Vice-President Kallas. "It will be particularly helpful to understand how we can gear our road transport policy towards growth and competitiveness, by making the sector more efficient and the rules governing it fairer and more effective".

The High level group's recommendations

The recommendations highlight the economic, social and environmental benefits of opening the road transport market, where cabotage operations are still limited to around 2% of all national transport operations for hire and reward. The High Level Group is proposing a flexible and gradual opening of national road transport markets, to be flanked by measures to ensure that sufficient labour forces are available, that rules are applied fairly and that innovation can be promoted. These recommendations include:

- To restore the attractiveness of the job of drivers
- To and ensure fair conditions of competition through clear and efficient enforcement.
- To open up cabotage gradually.
- To oblige drivers carrying out cabotage activities not linked with an international transport to apply the same labour law of their local competitor under the same principles as the ones of the Posting of Workers' Directive¹.
- To promote innovation in road transport to help achieve the objective of a more efficient and sustainable road freight transport.

In particular, the Group recommends that two different types of cabotage be introduced:

- 'Linked cabotage', limited to a short period of time and connected to an international carriage,
- and 'non-linked cabotage', which may take place for a longer time, independently of the existing international carriage and which would be subject to a registration procedure to ensure that the drivers involved apply the labour law of their local competitor.

Background

The report of the High Level Group on the internal market concluded a year of stakeholder consultation and research. The Group, chaired by Professor Brian T. Bayliss, assisted by the Commission, carried out hearings and consultations with 126 stakeholder organisations. On the basis of this feedback, the Group published recommendations relating to four critical fields:

- driver shortages
- enforcement
- cabotage
- innovation

Next steps

The report of the High Level Group will feed into the report which the Commission has to publish on the situation of the EU road haulage market by 2013. Depending on the results of this report, the Commission may accompany it with a proposal to further open the EU road haulage market to competition.

¹ Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, OJ L 18, 21.1.1997, p. 1–6

More information

Summary of recommendations

Report of the High Level Group on the situation of the EU road haulage market

[European Commission website on road haulage](#)

[MEMO/12/457](#)

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