



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

# Transport, Telecommunications and Energy



**07.05.09**

## **MEPs reject the Directive on working time for road transport workers**

The European Parliament rejected, at first reading, a proposal by Commission amending the existing Directive on the organisation of working time of persons performing mobile road transport activities. MEPs said that the draft proposal does not take into account Parliament's demand of the full inclusion of self-employed drivers. The EP has called on the Commission to withdraw its proposals and take appropriate steps together with Parliament to submit a new proposal.

The European Parliament has demanded for the full inclusion of self-employed drivers as well as the quick implementation of social legislation relating to road transport, but now it says the the European Commission proposal contradicts these demands. The Commission proposed to address the issue of false self-employed workers – drivers that are not tied by an employment contract but do not have the freedom to have relations with several customers. The proposal aims at better clarifying the definitions of mobile workers. Directive 2002/15/EC became applicable on 23 March 2005. Its common rules ensure minimum social protection standards for mobile workers in the road transport sector and are perceived as an important step towards improving the health and safety protection of mobile workers in this area.

When adopting the Directive after a conciliation procedure, Council and Parliament agreed that it should in principle apply to self-employed drivers from 23 March 2009. In addition, the Commission is requested to present a report at the latest two years before that date to the European Parliament and the Council, followed by a legislative proposal based on the report, which would either define the modalities for the inclusion or exclude the selfemployed drivers from the scope of the Directive.



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## **Commission Consultation Note Driver training and traffic safety education**

The Commission is conducting a consultation process on driver training and traffic safety education. Its objective is to provide a framework to help further define guidelines and recommendations for efficient driver training and traffic safety education in the European Union. Research in recent decades has demonstrated that one of the main causes of accidents is due to youth's lack of experience and lack of insight into the risks of driving. Another reason of their high involvement in accidents concerns lifestyle factors which are not directly linked to driving itself but that influence their ability and motivation to perform safely when they drive. The driver training models that currently exist in the Member States often focus on driving techniques and the use of vehicle. External factors such as goals behind driving objectives, the driving context and personal motives are rarely considered. Yet, these personal and contextual factors play an important role in the road user's behaviour.

The aim of this consultation is therefore to get the views from stakeholders on how to develop such guidelines and their contents. For this purpose, the document attached takes stock of the current situation, and identifies some possible recommendations.

Below please find the related documents on this consultation:

**Consultation Paper:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road\\_safety/consultations/doc/2009\\_06\\_22\\_training\\_education\\_consultation\\_paper.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/consultations/doc/2009_06_22_training_education_consultation_paper.pdf)

**Annex:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road\\_safety/consultations/doc/2009\\_06\\_22\\_training\\_education\\_consultation\\_paper\\_annex.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/consultations/doc/2009_06_22_training_education_consultation_paper_annex.pdf)

**Questionnaire:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road\\_safety/consultations/doc/2009\\_06\\_22\\_training\\_education\\_questionnaire.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/consultations/doc/2009_06_22_training_education_questionnaire.pdf)

**Follow-up:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road\\_safety/consultations/doc/2009\\_06\\_22\\_training\\_education\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/consultations/doc/2009_06_22_training_education_en.pdf)



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**Comments should be sent by fax or e-mail, not later than 22.06.2009 to:**

European Commission

DG TREN

Road safety unit

Reference: 'Driver training and traffic safety education'

Fax: 00 32 2 296 51 96

E-mail: [TREN-E3-CONSULTATION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:TREN-E3-CONSULTATION@ec.europa.eu)

### **EP pushes for clear and easily-understandable energy label for TV sets**

The European Parliament has blocked – by 399 votes in favour, 260 against and 12 abstention, the Commission's plan to change the format for the energy labelling of TV sets by subdividing the highest energy class A. It said that the new energy efficiency classes for household goods proposed by the European Commission could mislead consumers who are buying a new TV set. MEPs however approved the new label for household fridges and freezers.

The Commission originally proposed an implementing measure which would have subdivided the highest energy class 'A' by adding new classes such as 'A-20%', 'A-40%', 'A-60%' etc. MEPs however opposed this new format since it could "add to confusion about whether class 'A' represents an efficient or an inefficient product". MEPs said that instead, the Commission should reserve the 'A' label status for the top 10-20% best performing equipment. Given the high-energy consumption of television, there is considerable potential for saving energy by adding this category to the energy labelling scheme. Parliament is therefore calling on the Commission to submit new draft measures based on a closed 'A-G' scale by end of September 2009.

#### **How does decision making work?**

Under the current energy labelling directive, adopted by Parliament and Council in 1992, the Commission may set technical requirements, such as the energy classes for household appliances such as freezers, washing machines, driers, dishwashers, or air-conditioners. Parliament and Council may block such implementing measures under a "regulatory procedure with scrutiny". Parliament can do so by an absolute majority of its members (i.e. at least 393 MEPs).



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## Interview with British MEP Mr Harbour on the Telecoms Package and the Internet

Mr Harbour, is guiding the consumer protection-related issues of the proposed legislation through parliament. Other aspects involve radio spectrum measures and the creation of a body to step up co-operation between national regulators to tackle telecoms regulation.

The interview can be accessed through this link:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdfs/news/public/story/20090504STO54873/20090504STO54873\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdfs/news/public/story/20090504STO54873/20090504STO54873_en.pdf)

**One of the last outstanding issues during the talks between MEPs and Ministers was measures regarding access to electronic communications services. How do the new proposals concern users' internet access and use?**

*This directive package has never been about copyright enforcement. The Parliament cannot impose on a country conditions about how it organises its judicial system. That is a basic element of subsidiarity. What we have done is to make it absolutely clear that the right to access the internet is part of European citizen's fundamental rights and so the Convention on European Rights and Fundamental Freedoms will apply.*



*Issues about limiting access to website are dealt with by national governments. There is not a European prescription on this matter. For example in France you cannot access a website that sells Nazis memorabilia; the French government decided that. What we can do at European level is to make a general requirement for consumers to have information about sites that are restricted, so you as a consumer are entitled to know if a provider is limiting access to certain sites and for what reasons. You might choose to have a service-limited package; nobody has ever suggested that we have a general rule that if you buy an electronic communications service package you will have access to everything. That's like saying that if you have a bookshop you are legally obliged to stock every book.*

**According to rumours in cyberspace the proposed new rules will impose conditional access to internet, providers will be able to limit the number of site you're visiting and Skype could be blocked. Is Internet freedom really at risk?**



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*That's pure fantasy. The Telecoms package has never been about anything to do with restrictions on the internet. I am astonished to see this remarkable text from Black-out Europe. There is absolutely nothing in this proposal that says anything about that.*

### **What consumer-friendly measures are there?**

*Information will be much more transparent and open, making it easier for consumers to change service providers. In the precontractual information they will have to know if they are tied in for a service for a particular time. Also operators will not be able to tie in users for more than 24 months, because in a very fast moving world like the internet that's a disincentive to change. Alongside that it will be easier for people to transfer their telephone number from one service provider to another; that has to be done within one working day. We have also stepped up the quality of the emergency service, you will have caller location information on your handset, which could be a life or death issue. We have also strengthened price transparency, availability of price comparison websites, and the ability of the national regulators to oblige operators to provide service access for disabled people. Consumers will be able to request a price cap when their usage reaches a certain amount during a month. If your personal data is released inadvertently by communications providers onto the internet they have to give you a proper notification of that.*

### **How much should the Internet be policed, if at all?**

*Clearly the internet has to be policed because it is being used for illicit activities such as terrorist activities, child pornography, child trafficking and so on. The basic principle is that internet always has to be a free internet, but it is not completely regulation free.*

**Do you think the internet should be policed? - Share your views by clicking on this link:**

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2009/welcome/headlines.htm;jsessionid=5527B1F126E4DC26048AB382700CA932.node2?language=EN&ref=20090504STO54873&secondRef=0#debate>