



Polis Brief: Revision of the Weights and Dimensions directive (W&D) – an opportunity to make lorries safer with better cab design

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On the 15th of April, the European Parliament endorsed the Transport Committee's proposal to make safety requirements to lorry cab design mandatory by an overwhelming 570 MEPs for and 88 against. **The vote in the European Parliament sends out a strong signal to incentivize the industry and legislators to pursue the issue of safety related to Heavy Good's Vehicles (HGVs) design.** It follows months of discussions to raise awareness amongst MEPs of the importance of safety through cabin design of HGVs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HGVs are disproportionately involved in vulnerable road users fatal accident and serious injuries in cities. Some figures:

- ▶ HGVs account for 53% of cyclists deaths in London and 7 out of 12 deaths in Copenhagen between 2008 and 2012
- ▶ In 2013, HGVs were involved in 9 of the 14 cyclist deaths in London, and 2 of the 4 cyclist deaths in Copenhagen
- ▶ 10% of fatal accidents for cyclists in Belgium are due to HGV and trucks blind spots according to the report from the Belgian Institute for Road Safety in 2012

Many regional and local transport authorities are developing responses to the problem of HGVs in towns and cyclists' safety (presentations by [Berlin](#) and [London](#) at Polis Road Safety working group meeting on 11 February 2014 and).

One of the solutions to improve safety for vulnerable road uses is **better HGVs cab design that would enable the driver to see cyclists and pedestrians and reduce the impact in case of collision.** Current design affects the safety performance of European lorries. There is no room for crash boxes or crumple zones on cab fronts. The blunt front also leads to a high risk of pedestrians and cyclists being knocked under the wheels and run over in case of collisions. The current design also limits the driver's field of direct vision; this creates deadly blind spots around the cab.

REVISION OF THE W&D DIRECTIVE

European legislation to improve vision and reduce impact in case of accidents of HGVs cab design would be a substantial support to help local and regional authorities reduce the safety risks for vulnerable road users linked to the circulation of HGVs in towns.





The **revision of the Weights and Dimensions directive (W&D) for HGVs tabled by the European Commission in March 2013 offered an opportunity to make roads safer for vulnerable road users in cities**, notably cyclists. The proposal stated that HGV manufactures may increase the length of vehicles on the condition that cabs are more aerodynamic and safer.

Polis and member Transport for London alongside a number of Brussels based stakeholders have been supporting the introduction of strong safety requirements:

- ▶ Joint letter signed by London, Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Madrid sent to Members of European Parliament (EP) TRAN Committee (04/02/2014)
- ▶ Joint Statement co-signed by Polis, TfL and Brussels based organizations: [Safer, cleaner lorries Now!](#)
- ▶ A series of meetings with prominent MEPs on the TRAN Committee – including the rapporteur on the dossier (SPÖ Leichtfried) – to underline the importance of safety through cab design.
- ▶ The **Polis Working Group meeting on Safety and Security** on the 11th of February 2014 in Brussels discussed the issue of vulnerable road users safety in relation to HGVs in cities. For the presentation, [click here](#) (log in as member on the website)

NEXT STEPS

The European Institutions

The main concern is unnecessary delays in bringing forth better cab design through legislation.

- ▶ **Member States will now discuss the proposal** adopted in the European Parliament in Council. But there is little inclination amongst Members States to agree to include mandatory safety requirements in the final proposal for the W&D directive
- ▶ **DG Move is now working on defining the technical requirements** for improving aerodynamics and safety within the framework of the revision of the Weights and Dimensions' directive. An expert working group that brings together stakeholders is contributing to the work
- ▶ In the next legislature, **the revision of General safety regulation within Type Approval directive** to include safety requirements through cabin redesign will be the next major legislative step. The Type Approval directive falls under DG enterprise. However, the work being done by DG Move on defining the technical requirements for safety in the framework of the W&D directive could speed up the work for revision the general safety regulation within Type Approval

What Cities and Regions can do:

- ▶ **Call upon their national governments to take a strong position on safety regulation through cab design in the discussion in the Council**
- ▶ **Raise awareness with their national governments** of the importance of safety requirements for trucks cabin design