



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 7.11.2013  
C(2013) 7415 final

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion concerning the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 96/53/EC of 25 July 1996 laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorised dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorised weights in international traffic {COM(2013)195 final}.*

*The Commission highly appreciates the Assembleia da República's support for the main objective of the proposal, which is to improve the energy efficiency and the safety of road transport and to decrease its greenhouse gas emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>).*

*A further important objective of the proposed amendment is the establishment of a level playing field inside the Single Market which is currently distorted by unwarranted abuses related to overweight transport operations. This puts hauliers who comply with the rules at a competitive disadvantage in relation to those who do not.*

*With regard to cross-border traffic of longer vehicles, the proposed amendment clarifies the existing Article 4 of this Directive, which has previously been interpreted in different manners. This Article, as amended, would allow a longer vehicle to cross one border between two Member States, where the Member States in question authorise the circulation of such vehicles on their respective territories. Each Member State may make such an individual choice based on local conditions. The Directive would not impose on Member States an obligation to allow the free circulation of longer trucks on their roads. At the same time, if two Member States have authorized the use of such vehicles and if they share a border, there is no reason for EU rules to prevent such longer trucks crossing that shared border as long as international competition is not significantly affected. In order to ensure that international competition will not be significantly affected, this possibility is limited to only one crossing of the border.*

*Ms Maria da Assunção ESTEVES  
President of the  
Assembleia da República  
Palácio de S. Bento  
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*The Commission takes note of the Assembleia da República's request to extend this authorization to crossing all borders between Member States applying the same rules. This possibility was not permitted in the Commission's proposal, since it could create a situation where such trucks are used in longer journeys across Europe, putting competitive pressure on Member States which do not want to accept them to comply. The proposal is however with the co-legislators who will decide on the final text.*

*At present, the circulation of vehicles or vehicle combinations exceeding the maximum dimensions is authorised in Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands. Trials are taking place in Denmark and parts of Germany.*

*The Commission hopes that these observations address the concerns raised by the Assembleia da República and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President*