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EU truck dimension regulations

Commission proposals ensure democratic due process but door remains open to gigaliners

The EU Commission today presented proposals to revise EU legislation on truck dimensions (Directive 96/53/EC). The move marks a reversal by EU transport commissioner Siim Kallas who had originally announced that he was planning to change EU policy on heavier and longer trucks, so-called gigaliners, with a view to legalising their cross-border use, without making a legislative proposal and thereby avoiding a co-decision process. The Greens welcomed the fact that the legislation will now be revised through a democratic co-decision legislative process but regretted that the door to gigaliners remains open. Commenting on the proposals, Green transport spokesperson **Michael Cramer** said:

"Today's proposals will ensure that EU rules on truck dimensions will be decided in an open democratic process. This is a welcome reversal from the original intention by transport commissioner Kallas, who had announced plans to completely reverse EU policy on cross-border traffic of gigaliners through the backdoor, without any legislative process. The content of the proposals is nonetheless regrettable.

"The Commission still envisages permitting cross-border operation of longer and heavier trucks, but justifies this with misleading claims about efficiency. The gains in efficiency and safety can be achieved without substantially changing the dimensions of vehicles. The failure by the Commission to present any supporting evidence on the effects of gigaliners, such as an impact assessment, to support its claims is a clear indictment of these proposals and flies in the face of good regulating. There has also been no attention given to the potential impact of a change in the rules on the shift of freight away from rail, which is clearly safer, more efficient and better for the environment. Studies show that more than 35% of single-wagon load could be shifted from rail to road.

"Meanwhile, the Commission is trying to open the door to the use of gigaliners across the EU, by allowing member states to decide on whether to allow the cross-border transit of these mega-trucks by bilateral agreements. Clearly, this will create pressure on member states to open their borders to these mega-trucks, which are not only worse for the environment and climate change but are also more dangerous. The Greens will fight to ensure this is not included in the final legislation."

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