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UEAPME Transport Forum

Position on the access to the road haulage market

UEAPME Transport Forum is a co-operation platform set up by UEAPME (The European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) and bringing together representatives of European branch confederations, SMEs from road transport, manufacturing and repair of road vehicles. It aims to gather different stakeholders and develop joint positions on all road transport-related issues such as sustainable transport, organisation of the supply chain, road safety, infrastructure efficiency.

Background:

The European Commission proposed to review Regulation (EC) No 1072/2009 and 1071/2009 on conditions for access to the international road haulage market and to the occupation of road transport operator, and drew up a discussion paper, including the proposal of five different Policy Packages, in order to get feedback and to present a legislative proposal by mid 2013.

Our position:

UEAPME Transport Forum strongly supports the idea that cabotage may not be liberalised as long as no social harmonisation exists. There is no necessity to introduce new cabotage rules since the current problem is the lack of the efficient enforcement of existing rules. UEAPME TF deeply believes in the need to dispose of rules for accessing the profession for freight forwarders and shippers and stress the importance of a joint liability.

Any of the 5 proposed Policy Packages reflects UEAPME Transport Forum position, thus we propose a 6th Policy Package, which should take the following elements into consideration:

- 1) No establishment of a cabotage register: registers entail enormous administrative costs for SMEs without guaranteeing real positive effects.
- 2) Maintaining the current cabotage rules: harmonisation and efficient enforcement are the keys for the European transport market. The lack of harmonization between Member States legislations causes great differences in tax, social and labour costs between new and old EU Member States, creating distortion of competition.
- 3) Clarifying the current regulation: new regulations could create confusion, misunderstandings and different applications of the same rules in Europe. A clarification of the current rules could guarantee a harmonized enforcement of them.
- 4) Minimum standards or levels of checks have to be introduced to fight illegal operations and price dumping which make the competition hard for domestic operators.

- 5) Rules have to be introduced for the access to the profession for shippers and freight forwarders. Fair competition cannot be guaranteed without similar conditions for the access to the profession between the different professional categories.

Furthermore, UEAPME Transport Forum does not believe that opening cabotage could succeed in realising a fair European single market because high-cost countries would lose markets in favour of low-cost countries, causing social injustice.

Concerning empty journeys, the TF thinks that opening cabotage cannot solve the problem, and that the amount of transported goods and empty tracks would remain the same.

In order to face these issues, UEAPME Transport Forum suggests the following actions:

- a **better cooperation and transparency between EU Member States**
- a **step-by-step harmonization of regulations, compensations and other business costs between new and old Member States**
- a **sharing of best practices to develop control tools, methods and mechanisms together within the EU**
- a **further development of intelligent traffic systems that enhance transparency of transport data between EU countries.**

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