

CAN TRANSPORT POLICY IGNORE THE INFRASTRUCTURE REALITY?

IN OTHER WORDS

CAN VEHICLES FLY?

The study: *"Effects of adapting the rules on weights and dimensions of heavy commercial vehicles"* funded by the European Commission is now published dealing with the free circulation of 60 tonnes mega-trucks on the European motorways, roads, bridges and tunnels.

ASECAP believes that the study is not complete and is far apart from reality.

The study examines only one side of the problem, that is the possible benefits of the introduction of mega-trucks on Europe's roads, i.e. less congestion, lower pollution, better traffic management, cheaper prices, etc. Although there are easier tools to get the above targets, such as ITS, intelligent traffic management, logistics, better use of cabotage, etc, one could be tempted to think that the circulation of gigaliners might give an answer to the above-mentioned concerns. Albeit, ASECAP considers that the study must be completed by examining the other side of the problem, i.e. "whether Europe's road infrastructures, in particular motorways, bridges and tunnels, roundabouts, crash barriers, junctions, etc, are designed and constructed to have these mega trucks circulating on them".

It is a common secret that vehicles do not fly, at least with the given technologies. For this reason the authors of the study must examine seriously all the aspects of the road infrastructure, and when doing so, they should consult the road infrastructure operators too, and not only a variety of stakeholders, even railways!

All the policy makers and the industry know that the European road infrastructures are designed and constructed for lower limits of weights and dimensions. It took over 25 years of lengthy discussions in the EU to agree on the existing EU standards of 40/44 tonnes and 18 meters. A possible introduction of 60 t. and 25 meters vehicles would require prudent discussions given that they will surely result in an increased risk on Europe's citizens' lives and extremely higher infrastructure cost.

ASECAP is confident that the European Commission will examine seriously the missing elements of the study in relation to the infrastructure reality of the European road infrastructure.

'Mega-trucks' circulation is an extremely complex issue and all the "pros" and "cons" have to be scrutinized in order to agree on a prudent road map avoiding blind considerations that might lead to dramatically increased costs and high safety risks.