



The Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

14 May 2014

Dear Secretary of State

Lorry safety and vulnerable road users: Proposal for amending EU Directive 96/53 on the Weights and Dimensions of HGVs

We write as organisations concerned with the safety of vulnerable road users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists.

We understand you will shortly be deciding the UK Government's stance on the above Proposal, ahead of the Council of Ministers' vote on June 5th. We understand that, regrettably, a couple of nation states are seeking to delay its potentially life-saving provisions. The European Parliament recently voted to make safety an important part of this proposal. We urge you to support the Parliament text concerning safety and give the Directive wholehearted backing.

You may be aware that a cyclist was killed only yesterday at the Elephant & Castle roundabout in London, in collision with a lorry. Lorries are involved in the 15% of pedestrian deaths in Britain and nearly a fifth of cyclists' deaths. In London they are involved in over a half of all cyclists' deaths.

What makes lorries particularly lethal is the design of the cab, with drivers positioned high up and surrounded by metal panelling (rather than transparent window material). Research has shown that creates a substantial 'blind-spot' area, making it difficult for lorry drivers to see pedestrians directly in front of them or cyclists near the front corner of their vehicles. This is especially hazardous when lorries are making left turning manoeuvres on urban streets.

'Indirect vision' safety technology (such as mirrors, cameras and sensors) may well help, but there are concerns that it may still be difficult for drivers to interpret all the visual information they are meant to absorb while cornering.

The primary solution must surely be to improve the ability of lorry drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists directly. This is fundamentally what this proposal seeks to address.

Some lorry manufacturers are concerned simply to delay the costs of developing safer lorry designs. Yet such a delay would continue to put pedestrians' and cyclists' lives at risk. This in turn deters people from taking up walking and cycling as safe and normal ways to get around for day-to-day journeys, undermining the Government's efforts to tackle congestion, pollutant and greenhouse emissions, and to improve the health of the nation.

We therefore urge you to support the proposal for amending Directive 96/53. We specifically ask you to:

- Agree with the European Parliament not to permit further international use of mega-trucks until a full European Commission report is carried out in 2016;
- Agree with the European Parliament on making safety a fundamental part of the allowance of extra length to lorry cabs; and
- Ensure that lead-in times for the introduction of safer lorry designs are as short as possible – the ten years proposed by some Member States is unacceptable for what is essentially enabling legislation.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



On behalf of:

Martin Key
Campaigns Manager, British Cycling

Philippa Edmunds
Freight on Rail manager, Campaign for Better Transport

Roger Geffen
Campaigns & Policy Director, CTC, the national cycling charity

Tom Platt
London Manager, Living Streets

Ashok Sinha
Chief Executive, London Cycling Campaign

Cynthia Barlow
Chair, RoadPeace

Kate Cairns
Founder, See Me Save Me campaign

Jason Torrance
Policy Director, Sustrans

Please respond to:

Roger Geffen
CTC, the national cycling charity
CTC national office
Parklands, Railton road
Guildford, Surrey
GU2 9JX

01483 238322
Roger.geffen@ctc.org.uk