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Henna Virkkunen: Fair rules for EU road transport

The European Parliament gave its final consent for the long-negotiated mobility package. One of the Rapporteurs during the past year, MEP Henna Virkkunen (EPP-FI) is pleased with the achieved compromise result.

“The mobility package promotes fair competition between operators and improves road safety as well as drivers’ working conditions. The European single market cannot properly function without fair common rules which are uniformly controlled and enforced”, says Virkkunen.

One of the most debated issue throughout the negotiations has been the provision to ensure that the drivers can choose to return to their home at least once per month. The employer must also provide the driver with proper resting facilities for over 45 hour long regular weekly rests.

“Certain minimum working standards are needed to ensure level playing field between operators. Undermining employment conditions cannot be used as a competitive asset”, Virkkunen states.

The new rules will introduce some additional flexibilities for driving and resting times, which allows for the companies more freedom in arranging their working schedules. It will become possible for the drivers to make use of long ferry trips as resting time, helping to optimise their planning.

An essential new element in terms of fair competition is the inclusion of light commercial vehicles of over 2.5 tonnes into the scope of regulation.

“Internet shopping has led to increases in international LCV deliveries. Such professionally driven transport should be covered by the driving and resting rules. This is to discourage operators from changing to smaller vehicles just to circumvent the rules, which in turn increases emissions and endangers road safety”, Virkkunen explains.

The new rules will be enforced and controlled more efficiently thanks to new technology. From 2023 onwards, new smart tachographs will be introduced via staged approach, allowing for automatic recording of driving times, border crossings, loading and unloading operations.

Henna Virkkunen acts as the European Parliament Rapporteur for regulations on driving and resting times as well as the use of tachographs. In addition, the mobility package covers legislation on access to the market and posting drivers in the road transport sector.

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