

Social rules on transport: There is chaos on Europe's roads

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"There is chaos on Europe's roads. Admittedly, there are uniform rules on driving times, rest-times and the regulation of tachographs in Europe but due to the different transposition of legislation in individual member states any standardisation gets lost. Especially where transportation businesses and truckers are concerned. The penalty for the same offence can vary between €300 and €3,000 depending on the country. Therefore we urgently need pan-European coordination and control. Europe's transportation businesses demand uniform procedures and more legal certainty," said rapporteur Hella Ranner (LVP/EPP) after the vote on her report on 'Social Rules in Transport' in the Transport Committee of the European Parliament today. "Now there is a strong response needed from the Commission and the Member States to deal seriously with the issue."

Social rules in transport pursue three goals: Traffic security, employee protection and fair competition. "At present, we are far from attaining these goals. One notable problem is the lack of sufficient and secure parking places. If rest times for truck drivers are legally required, it also has to be physically possible for them to do so", criticises Ranner. "There is a lack of infrastructure on Europe's main traffic routes." Truckers complain that it is not possible to leave their freight alone and unsupervised in some Member States without being at risk of theft."

Ranner's Report set out the line clearly: "Only full European coordination can guarantee a uniform and efficient procedure." Penalties vary from country to country. For example, Truck drivers often try to escape from heavy penalties in one Member State by driving into countries where penalties are lower and less stringently controlled. These different controls in the Member States lead to large uncertainties for drivers and truck companies. There is also a need for better education of the controllers", Ranner continued. "We urgently need better European controls coordination and a unique system of individual violations of the social rules. Only then can we improve the conditions on Europe's roads and ultimately guarantee better security on Europe's roads," Ranner concluded.