



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue
Social dialogue, Industrial Relations

Brussels, 26 May 2011

**SECTORAL DIALOGUE
COMMITTEE
ROAD TRANSPORT**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee

8 November 2010

The meeting was chaired by Mr Causse (employers). The agenda was adopted. The minutes of the last plenary meeting (30 November 2009) were adopted without any comments or amendments.

It was further agreed that Mr Causse would still chair the meeting of 6 December 2010, and that ETF (Mr Sugic, currently Vice-Chairman of the committee) would take over the rotating chairmanship of the committee early 2011.

EC Road Safety Action Plan 2011-2020 (DG MOVE)

Ms Marolda presented the Commission policy orientations and strategic guidelines for road safety 2011-2020, including a common European road safety area, as well as the Commission's ongoing PRAISE project aiming at preventing work-related road accidents and injuries (see slide presentations for further detail). She highlighted that road safety was not only a transport issue but linked to other policy areas such as public health, environment, employment, health and safety at work, taxation, energy, and others. According to the Commission's analysis, the necessary infrastructure was there, and a major focus was now needed on more adaptive safety systems, on the behaviour and training of road users, all categories included, and on effective enforcement.

Ms Marolda highlighted the importance of the contribution and active involvement of the social partners in the implementation of the suggested guidelines in order to reach the policy objectives. She called in particular on the employers to develop specific safety plans for their employees. The employees needed to be conscious of these plans and help enforce them.

In her short overview of the Commission's ongoing PRAISE project aiming at preventing work-related road accidents and injuries, Ms Marolda highlighted that 39% of fatal accidents at work were 'on the road'. Therefore, a reinforced focus on corporate responsibility and an overall commitment on safety were needed, including suggestions for 'intelligent commuting'. The PRAISE project would consist of 9 thematic reports which would be summarised in a Handbook on road safety.

In the following discussion, Mr Causse confirmed the importance of safety training and the development of a real safety culture. ETF welcomed the recent improvements in road safety but regretted that the new policy orientations did not fully follow the Commission's earlier action plan on road safety. Their main concerns included: the lack of reference to rest facilities; the lack of focus on different vehicle types and notably the lack of focus and proposals regarding 'light vehicles' (below 3.5 t); the omission of fatigue and sleep disorders as one of the major causes of accidents; the distinction between professional drivers and other road users; the need to focus on accident black spots; and the recognition that road accidents have decreased despite strong increases in traffic volume. From the perspective of the road sector, the Commission's policy orientations further seemed to be lacking detail and proposals for concrete measures. Trade union representatives also questioned whether the transport infrastructure was really sufficient. On the other hand, participants in general welcomed the call of the Commission upon employers to develop road safety action plans, and they highlighted the need that all employers engage in this endeavour, and not only those of the road transport sector. Employers should develop these plans in cooperation with trade unions. IRU confirmed paying traditionally high attention to road safety and having signed the road safety charter. They agreed with the concerns raised and pointed to the existing IREP initiative which helps to identify black spots and areas with high accident probability.

They further highlighted the unique European Truck Accident Causation study (ETAC)¹ jointly undertaken by the IRU and European Commission. The study shows that human error is the main cause of 85.2% of the studied cases. However, out of those 85.2%, 75% are caused by other road users against 25% by the truck driver highlighting the need for non-professional drivers as well to learn how to share the road safely with professional users. The underlying causes should be duly reflected in the Commission's annual work programme, and education and training activities should be addressed at broader target audiences. Furthermore, while recognising the limited responsibility of the Commission with regard to infrastructure, IRU noted that the current austerity measures conducted as a result of the global financial and economic crisis were certain to have serious negative repercussions on road infrastructure investments.

Both sides of industry asked for further information on the annual work programme for 2011, and they expressed their disappointment about the lack of consultation of the social partners on this plan.

In her reply, Ms Marolda showed understanding for most of the concerns raised, while recalling that legislative powers in this area lied with the Member States and that, as regards infrastructure, the Commission was responsible for trans-national networks only, while general infrastructure measures fell under the responsibility of Member States. She further confirmed that the Commission actively supported the cooperation of the road transport sector with that of public transport. As regards the 2011 work programme, Ms Marolda informed participants that two priorities had been identified: first, a focus on two-wheelers; and second, measures to reduce the severity of injuries.

It was agreed that DG MOVE would inform and involve the committee on the definition of the next annual work programmes, and that such consultations would be but regularly

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/roadsafety_library/publications/etac_exec_summary.pdf
http://www.iru.org/en_bookshop_item?rewrite_sticky=bookshop-display-action&id=169

on the agenda of the committee. This point should also be included in the committee's work programme.

Mr Causse highlighted the role of the Commission for analysis and policy coordination and highlighted the need to intensify the regular exchange between the committee and DG MOVE, inviting DG MOVE to inform the committee every 6 months, including regular consultations on future road safety action plans.

Information by the European Commission

Mr Siebern-Thomas (DG EMPL) made a presentation of the key findings and policy conclusions of the recent Commission staff working document on the functioning and potential of European sectoral social dialogue (see slide presentation and Commission Staff Working Document). He highlighted that the Commission Staff Working Document was available online in all 23 official EU languages² and asked social partners to make active use of it and disseminate it among national members. He also informed participants on the recent release of the Commission brochure on recent developments in European sectoral social dialogue (English version distributed at the meeting; French and German translations available early 2011).

In the subsequent discussion, while emphasising the irreplaceable value of their own road transport Social Dialogue Committee which enabled a dedicated focus and dialogue on road transport specific issues, the social partners, also noted the potential value of exchanging information and potentially other forms of cooperation on a case by case basis with other sectoral Committees where there were issues of mutual interest. They also noted the necessary role of the Commission in providing timely information to the Social Partners via the Committee concerning cross sectoral social issues as well as in promoting implementation of agreements.

Discussion and adoption of the work programme 2011-2012

IRU presented the draft work programme and explained the latest amendments that it had suggested. ETF signalled their agreement to these amendments and the work programme was adopted without further discussion.

Any other business – cabotage activities and next meeting agenda

Participants agreed to address the following issues at the meeting of 6 December 2010: rest facilities; presentation of the TRACE project and enforcement of social rules; the joint declaration on illegal employment. Discussions on the issue of cabotage and its possible impact on working conditions – initially suggested by ETF – will be postponed to a later stage. IRU agreed that there may be an issue and showed their willingness to put the issue on the agenda of a future meeting but stated that they were unable to contribute to it at this stage. Yet they considered the issue more a 'market issue' than a 'social issue' and asked ETF to prepare a discussion paper on the link of cabotage with working conditions and European sectoral social dialogue. Mr Siebern-Thomas referred in this context to the recent contributions of social partners in the private security sector

² <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=329&langId=en>

to the Commission proposal on euro-cash transfers and possible solutions regarding wages and working conditions in the case of cabotage. Trade union representatives considered the existing regulation as insufficient and asked for a clarification of how to interpret the cabotage rule (currently 3 operations in 7 days, but it seems unclear what 'an operation' is). They further highlighted the lack of a framework and method for monitoring of cabotage activities which would allow for a "common, blatant abuse of cabotage activities." Mr Causse concluded that social partners should exchange information to reach a better understanding on the issue.

With regard to the meeting planning for 2011, Mr Siebern-Thomas recalled that the meeting dates were fixed in cooperation with, and upon proposal from the social partners. Some participants further regretted receiving Commission documents in English only and insisted that the Commission provide the documents in all working languages of the Commission (DE, EN and FR).

Finally, Mr Causse highlighted the need for the committee to also discuss in the future recruitment of young people, the image of the sector and professional training requirements. Those issues would need to be discussed against the background of changing developments in the sector such as the evolution and expansion of the road transport logistics sector.

Annex: List of participants 8.11.2010

<p>Employers (14 ♂, 3 ♀)</p> <p>Ms Antignac (FR) Mr Causse (FR) Mr Csányi (HU) Mr Dekindt (<i>UITP</i>) Mr Johansen (DK) Mr Larsen (DK) Ms Maître (FR) Mr Mannaerts (BE) Ms Mets (EE) Mr L. Nielsen (DK) Mr M. Nielsen (<i>IRU</i>) Mr Pardo Vegezzi (ES) Mr Riberio de Campos (PT) Mr Teunissen (LU) Mr Usonis (LT) Mr Viccars (<i>IRU</i>) Mr Yarsley (UK)</p>	<p>Workers (20 ♂, 6 ♀)</p> <p>Mr Aarestrup Jensen (DK) Mr Bessemans (BE) Ms Coulet (FR) Mr David (LU) Mr García Revuelta (ES) Mr Goument (FR) Mr Johnson (UK) Ms König (SE) Mr Mayer (UK) Ms Paas (NL) Mr Parrillo (BE) Mr Peeters (BE) Ms Petrova (BG) Mr Schloemer (DE) Mr Schönauer (AT) Mr Smidt (DK) Mr Sugic (FR) Mr Székely (HU) Ms Tilling (<i>ETF</i>) Mr Toomel (EE) Mr van Ravesteijn (NL) Mr Verestóy (HU) Ms Volkers (DE) Mr vtVeen (NL) Mr Wolff (LU) Mr Wozniak (BE)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">European Commission</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mr Siebern-Thomas (DG EMPL/F.1) Ms Marolda (DG MOVE/E.1)</p>	