



# UNION INTERNATIONALE DES CHAUFFEURS ROUTIERS

Internationale Union der Berufskraftfahrer - International Union of Professional Drivers

## Proposal of longer vehicles in Finland

**The biggest vehicle combinations in normal road transport in Europe are in Finland. Now they are going to be even bigger.**

In March the Ministry of Traffic and Communications (MINTC) in Finland published a proposal of new regulations of heavy vehicle measures. The maximum length of the vehicle combination will be increased from 25,25 meters to 34,50 meters, but the maximum weight will be 76 tonnes as it is today.

Almost five years ago the first experimental High Capacity Transport (HCT) -vehicles started on Finnish roads. Today the number of different kind of HCT-vehicles is more than 30. HCT-vehicle combinations are longer and/or heavier than normal vehicles in Finland. With those vehicles, operators and authorities have researched big vehicles' suitability for common use. The heaviest HCT-vehicle weighs 104 tonnes and the longest are just 34,5 meters.

The goal of testing the HCT-vehicles is to find out if they are useful and suitable to make road transport more effective and economical. As a result of all testing, the ministry decided to propose new regulation of vehicle measures. Bigger vehicles are more effective and, by decreasing the number of the trucks on the road, even can have positive effect to road safety.

Of course, the big vehicles challenges drivers, especially in winter conditions, but feedback from the HCT-vehicle drivers has been surprisingly positive. Naturally, in corners and roundabouts it is tight, but on roads there haven't been any problems.

At the moment (end of June 2018) the proposition is in consultation and final law will come into force later, perhaps at September or October. Many details are in discussion, but main outlines seem to be ready.

The Finnish legislation of heavy vehicles is not very simple. There are several rules of weight, length, weight distribution and turning circles that drivers should be aware of. In the list below, there are few of the points as an example that will be new according to the proposal. *They are not in force yet.*

- Max length truck + trailer: 34,50 m
- Max length tractor + semitrailer: 22,25 m
- Max length semitrailer from kingpin to rear: 18,00 m  
+ from kingpin to front in 2,04 m radius
- Max weight four axle bogie in trailer: up to 30 t
- Max weight five axle bogie in trailer: up to 36 t
- Requirements of wheelbase vs. total weight in certain trucks, trailers and combinations
- Up to three trailers possible in same combination e.g. semitrailer + dolly + semitrailer
- Requirements of certain driver assistant systems
- Requirements of equipment to ensure starting ability in winter conditions e.g. hydraulic drive in front axle, sand distributor or automatic ice chains

Jussi Mikkola

Member of the board of the U.I.C.R.