

PROTOCOL

Of the Meeting of the Latvian/Norwegian Joint Committee on International Road Transport Oslo, 10 - 11 June 2008

The Joint Committee, referred to in article 4 of the Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Norway and the republic of Latvia relating to International Transport by Road, concluded on 3 June 1994, held its meeting in Oslo on 10 - 11 June 2008.

List of participants:

Mr. Maris Pekalis	Director of Road Transport Department, Ministry of Transport, Head of Delegation
Mr. Aivars Olants	Head of Foreign Relations and European Affairs Division, Road Transport Department, Ministry of Transport
Ms. Iveta Rubika	Senior Officer, Foreign Relations and European Affairs Division, Ministry of Transport
Mr. Raimonds Aronietis	Transport Market Analyst, International Road Carriage Coordination Division, Road Transport Administration
Mr. Arnfinn Øen	Head of Road and Sea Transport Division, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Head of Delegation
Ms. Marianne Engeset Kristing	Higher Executive Officer, Ministry of Transport and Communications
Ms. Lone Bruvold Nilsen	Adviser, Norwegian Public Roads Administration
Mr. Jan B. Mejlænder-Larsen	Norwegian Hauliers Association

The following agenda was adopted:

1. Exchange of information on the development of foreign trade and road transport.
2. Transport of goods
3. Transport of passengers
4. Miscellaneous
 - Introduction of the International Vehicle weight Certificate (IVWC)
 - Implementation of EC Regulation 561/2006
 - Exchange of viewpoints concerning further development of the ECMT quota system and revision of the guide
 - The road package proposal, COM (2007)265, COM (2007)264 and COM (2007)263

Item 1.

Exchange of information on the development of foreign trade and road transport.

The meeting started with a short presentation by the Norwegian delegation about the transport challenges in Norway.

The delegations then exchanged statistics on the development of foreign trade and road transport between the two countries. Latvia pointed out that trade between Norway and Latvia during the recent years has increased, although there was a slight decrease in 2007. The same was confirmed by the Norwegian side.

The Latvian delegation also gave general information on passenger and goods transport by road in Latvia.

Item 2.

Transport of Goods

The quota for third country transport is 40 permits for 2008. The Latvian delegation proposed to increase the quota for 2009 to 50 permits and if necessary

to exchange 10 additional permits in 2008. Norway accepted the Latvian proposal. Latvia will contact Norway if there is a need for extra permits in 2008. Norway informed that there has been no use of the third country permits either in 2006, 2007 and so far in 2008 from the Norwegian side.

The delegations exchanged views on cabotage. Latvia informed that they have opened for cabotage on a bilateral level. Norway has decided not to open for cabotage for the “new” EU Members States until 1. May 2009 (Bulgaria and Romania in 2010, with the possibility of further prolonging until 2012), mainly because of the differences in wages and other costs, in addition to the unclear definition of the term “temporary” in the present Regulation. Latvia emphasized the importance of avoiding driving with empty trucks.

The agreement between Switzerland and the EU gives market access in accordance with EU Regulation 881/1992. This agreement will in short time be implemented in Norwegian legislation. From the time of implementation Latvian operators will not need to use third country permits between Norway and Switzerland.

Item 3.

Transport of Passengers

There are no difficulties in the field of passenger transport.

The passenger route between Riga and Oslo is no longer operating. This may be due to the increase in direct flights between our countries.

Item 4.

Miscellaneous:

4.1 Introduction of the International Vehicle weight Certificate (IVWC)

Norway was asked how they were dealing with the introduction of the International Vehicle Weight Certificate, which has recently been included in a new annex of the UNECE Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Control of Goods (1982). Norway responded that this amendment of the above mentioned convention had not been communicated to the Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communication, or its underlying Public Roads Administrations. Norway suspects it - since transport related issues only constitutes a certain part of the convention - to be the responsibility of another ministry, most likely the Ministry of Finance (which includes the Customs) or the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Norway will nevertheless take necessary steps to identify our obligations after the convention.

4.2 Implementation of EC Regulation 561/2006

The Latvian delegation asked how Norwegian authorities control the weekly rest according to the regulation.

Norway is conducting controls according to Regulation 561/2006 without any local adjustments.

Norway presented to the Latvian delegation the Norwegian national exemptions, which are exemptions for road maintenance, milk collection and the funfair industry.

The exemptions are so far applicable until 1. August 2008. Then Norway has to decide if these exemptions are going to continue. Norway also informed about the discussion in Norway about the transport of living animals, and that the limit on 50 km radius on this kind of transport is too low and that Norway wish to raise this limit.

Latvia informed that they use all the exemptions allowed in the Regulation.

4.3 Exchange of viewpoints concerning further development of the ECMT quota system and revision of the guide

The delegations discussed the further development of the quota and the guidebook. Latvia informed about the changes they would propose in the subgroup meeting on the 18. June 2008. Latvia had the following proposals:

- to change the definition of the word "recurring" in the guide,
- the ECMT licence can only be withdrawn by the issuing authorities except when the licence is forged,
- to clarify that the EURO classification is linked to the traction unit and not to the trailer.
- that the quota after 2010 should be decided for at least two years each time.

Latvia is in favour of removing the three journey restriction and to obtain the rule that transit in the registration country should be regarded as returning to the home country.

The Latvian delegation stressed that the ECMT quota system is very important for Latvian road operators. The Latvian delegation asks for the Norwegian support regarding one or more of the above mentioned issues. The Norwegian delegation noted the Latvian views about the ECMT quota and the guidebook and pointed out that Norway has not yet taken a stand in these issues.

4.4 The road package proposal, COM (2007)265, COM (2007)264 and COM (2007)263

The Norwegian delegation expressed their views on the road package proposal, especially three issues where stressed from the Norwegian side. These where:

- cabotage
- the criteria for financial standing
- the national electronic registers.

Norway handed over the Norwegian comment which has been sent to the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament.

The Latvian delegation noted the Norwegian views.

Latvia informed about the introduction of road user charges on the main roads in Latvia. The charges will apply for trucks over 12 tons. From 2012 on trucks over 7,5 tons. The charges will be in force from the middle of 2009. Latvia will provide more detailed information later on.

The Latvian delegation also informed that due to the Schengen-agreement Norwegian operators have to write on the permit the time and place for passing the Latvian border to and from EU-countries when using third country permits.

The Latvian delegation invited the Norwegian delegation for the next meeting of the Joint Committee in Latvia.

The meeting was conducted in a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

This protocol was prepared in Oslo, 11. June 2008 in two originals in the English language.

For the Latvian Delegation



Mr. Maris Pekālis

For the Norwegian Delegation



Mr. Arnfinn Øen