

Press Release - Pressemitteilung - 3-08

Pro-Rail Alliance, Friends of the Earth, EAC and ETF: "No mega trucks on Europe's roads"

Berlin/Brussels 08.07.08 The German railway alliance Allianz pro Schiene, the environmental group Friends of the Earth, the European Automobile Clubs (EAC) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) have all joined forces in a campaign against the introduction of longer and heavier vehicles (LHVs) on Europe's roads. With their information platform NO MEGA TRUCKS, they want to help associations and organisations from across Europe to create networks opposing LHVs, which can measure up to 25 metres in length and weigh up to 60 tonnes. The new website offers background information and an overview of the many groups and organisations that oppose mega trucks on Europe's roads. For the launch of the campaign, a total of 41 organisations representing ten million members from nine countries have registered on www.nomegatrucks.eu. "We have to create pan-European networks to demonstrate to EU decision makers that mega trucks are mega nonsense. People do not want longer and heavier vehicles on Europe's roads," said Dirk Flege, managing director of the German Pro-Rail Alliance at the campaign's launch.

On July 10, the EU Commission will present a study on increasing the permitted dimensions and weight of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). "Most German citizens believe that mega trucks are no longer an issue," said Flege. "If we are not careful, these vehicles will gain access to our roads through the European back gate. We have to prevent this from happening, because mega trucks are a danger to the public and to the environment."

Climate protection was the main reason that the European environmental umbrella group Friends of the Earth, which represents more than 30 national environmental organisations in Europe, helped to initiate the campaign. "Permitting mega trucks in Europe would endanger the European Union's climate targets," said Friends of the Earth Europe's coordinator for climate and energy, Sonja Meister. "Contrary to what their supporters claim, LHVs will lead to more traffic on the roads, more CO₂, more air pollution and more noise. In terms of environmental and traffic policies, there is no justification for them. To protect the climate we need a massive shift to the railways, because road freight transport consumes three times more energy per tonne-kilometre than rail freight."

Matthias Knobloch, Secretary General of the alliance of automobile clubs EAC, pointed out that car drivers across Europe would be at risk. "Due to longer overtaking times and trucks veering across several lanes during turning manoeuvres, the accident risk posed by Gigaliners is considerably higher than with normal HGVs. That is absolutely unacceptable. Even today, the risk of being killed in a road accident is twice as high when an HGV is involved."

The European Transport Workers' Federation ETF has also taken up a clear position with the NO MEGA TRUCKS campaign. ETF president Wilhelm Habertzettl said: "We are supporting the campaign because permitting mega trucks will burden HGV drivers with even greater work pressure and higher accident risk. That is unreasonable. In addition, goods transport would be shifted from the railways to the roads, putting thousands of jobs in the rail freight sector in danger and contributing in no way towards climate protection."

You can find more information on the EU-wide anti mega truck campaign at

www.nomegatrucks.eu

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Allianz pro Schiene is the German alliance for the promotion of environmentally friendly and safe rail transport. It unites 16 non-profit organisations that represent more than 2 million individual members, including environmental groups, transport clubs, consumer organisations and trade unions. The rail alliance is supported and financed by 79 companies that operate in the rail sector.

www.allianz-pro-schiene.de/english

Friends of the Earth Europe is the largest European environmental umbrella organisation. It campaigns for sustainable and just societies and for the protection of the environment, unites more than 30 national organisations with thousands of local groups and is part of the world's largest grass-roots environmental network, Friends of the Earth International.

www.foeeurope.org

European Automobile Clubs is an alliance of five German and Austrian automobile clubs. The EAC campaigns for balanced transport policies that include all modes of transport, and for greater safety and more sustainability in road traffic. The alliance represents the concerns of around 2.5 million people.

www.eac-web.eu

The **European Transport Workers' Federation** (ETF) is a pan-European trade union organisation which embraces 222 transport trade unions from 40 European countries. The ETF represents more than 2.5 million workers in railways, road transport, maritime transport, ports and docks, inland navigation, civil aviation, fisheries and tourism services.

www.itfglobal.org/etf

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