BGL POSITION

„Council Directive 96/53/EC“

Council Directive 96/53/EC laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorized dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorized weights in international traffic.

1. Preliminary note

The Council Directive 96/53/EC in its currently valid version laying down for certain road vehicles the maximum authorized dimensions and weights in national and international traffic defines the technical general conditions for road transport stipulated more than twelve years ago.

Due to the increase in freight volume arising from integration and globalization, the Commission announced measures aiming at promoting innovative technologies and procedures in the transport sector, improving efficiency of the modes of transport and their cooperation as well as increasing the quality of the logistics chain. In this context, discussions on new commercial vehicle concepts and the adaptation of the Council Directive 96/53/EC are currently being held all over Europe.

BGL supports the transport policy objective to promote multimodality, co-modality and inter-modality of the modes of transport and integrate them in a coherent European policy framework when modifying the maximum authorized dimensions and weights.

Isolated solutions on national level are to be rejected, so according to BGL, modular package solutions are the only possibility to comply with the various conditions of use and infrastructure in the individual member countries. For this purpose, it is only necessary to establish European standards for the individual basic modules in the transport sector. Their “assembling” to vehicle combinations as well as to multi-modal chains may be left up to the regulations in the member countries.

BGL expressly welcomes the procedure of the Commission to get an overview of possible consequences before amending the Council Directive 96/53/EC.

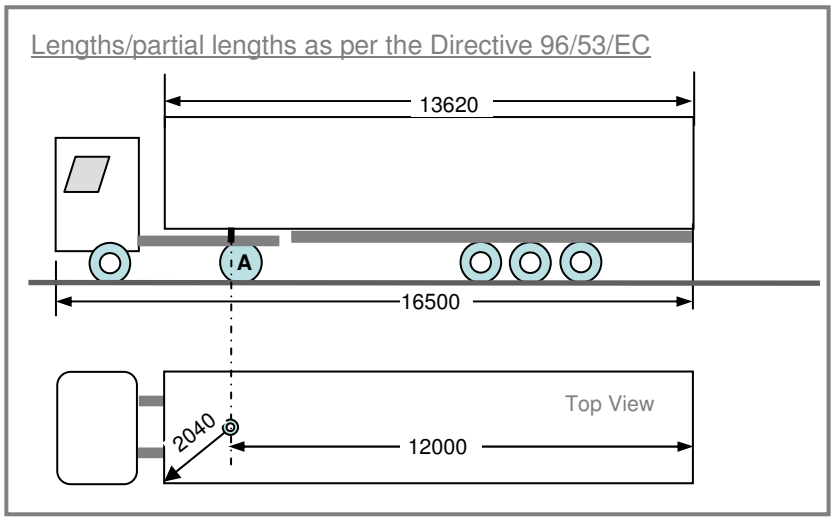
The necessary holistic view also requires taking into account the difficulties caused by the Council Directive 96/53/EC in its currently valid version as well as the necessary modifications arising from the technological interfaces of the EU with global trade flows.

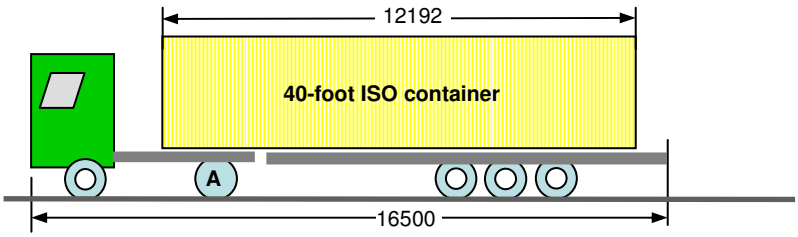
2. Current standard commercial vehicle combinations as per the Council Directive 96/53/EC

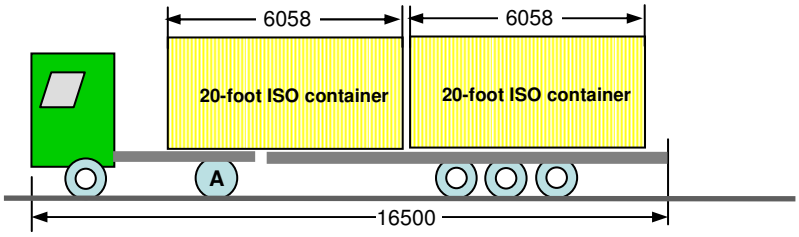
Articulated vehicle:

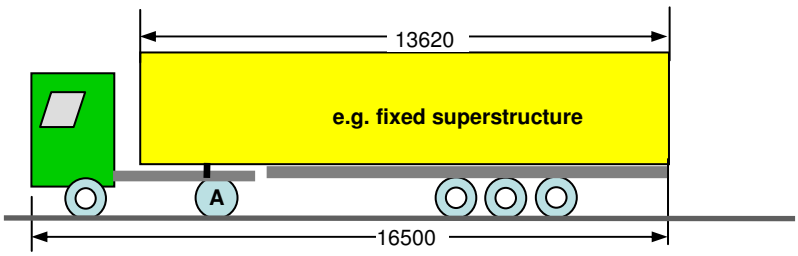
Semi-trailer tractor (4x2) and three-axle semi-trailer

- 5-axle truck combinations with an authorized road train weight of 40 t max.
- Tractors with one driving axle







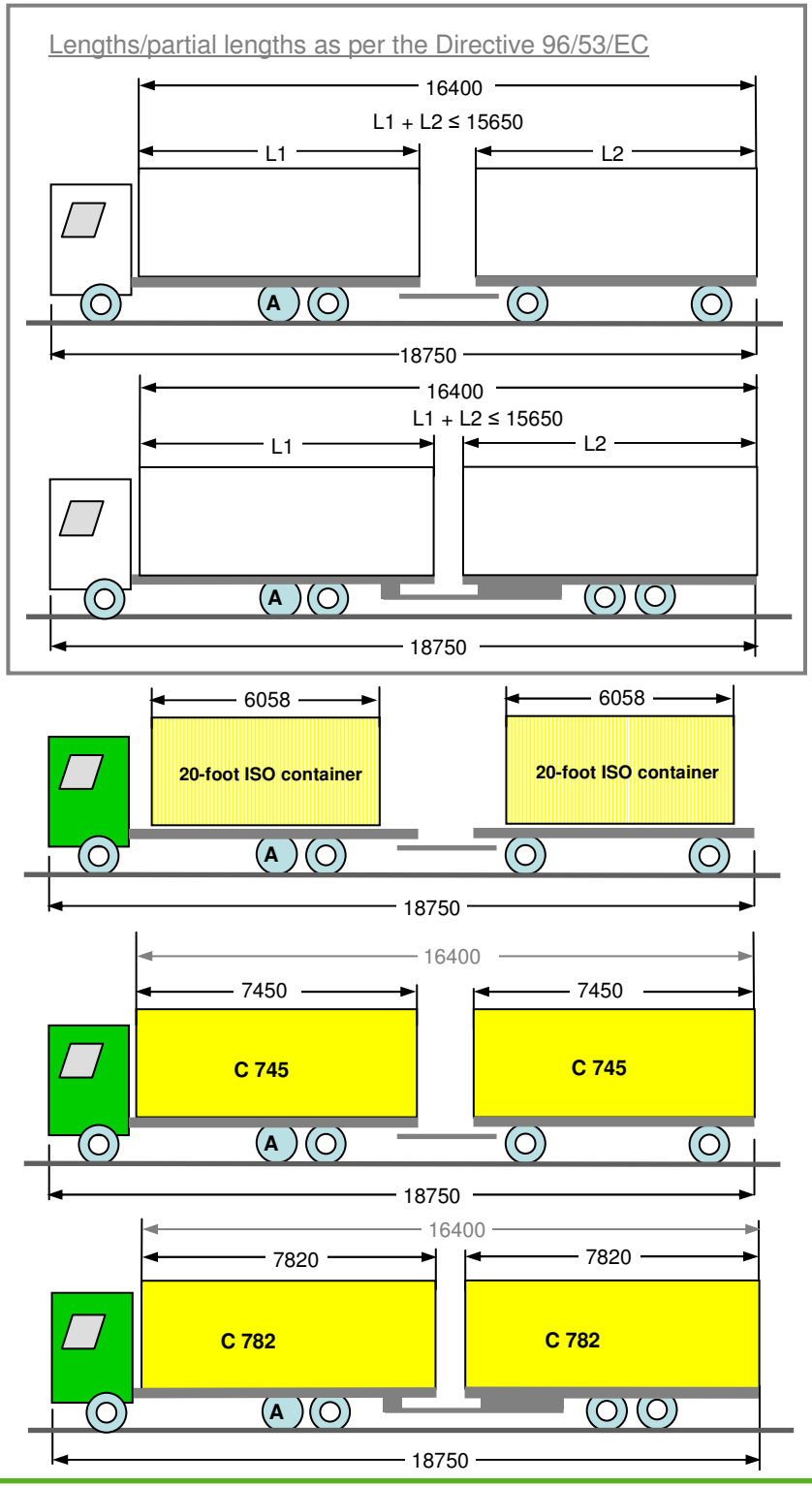


Truck-trailer unit:

Motor vehicle (6x2) and 2-axle trailer (fifth wheel steering trailer/rigid trailer)

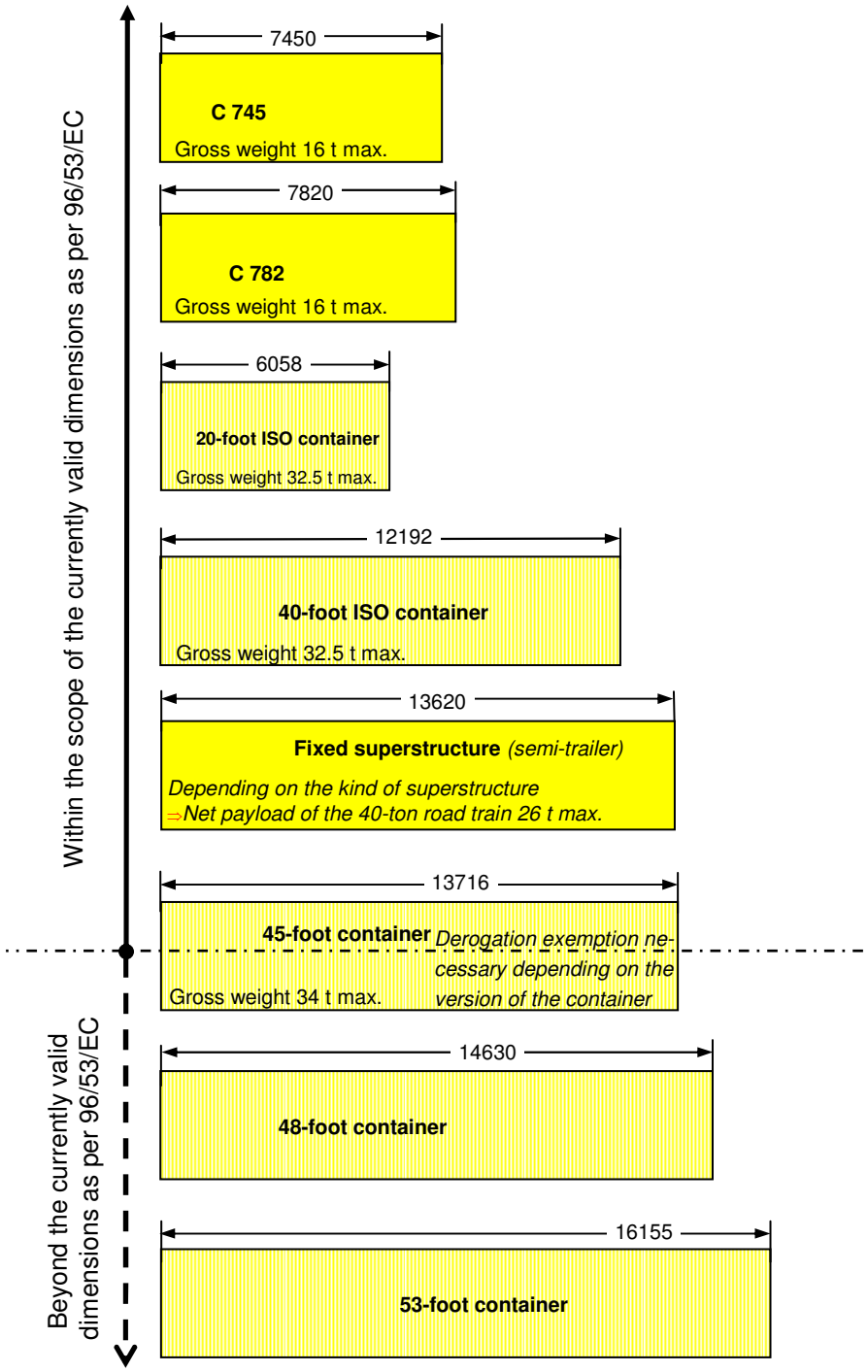
-5-axle truck combinations with an authorized road train weight of 40 t max.

- Tractors with one driving axle



3. Containers / Superstructures: Basic modules

Basic modules currently in use:

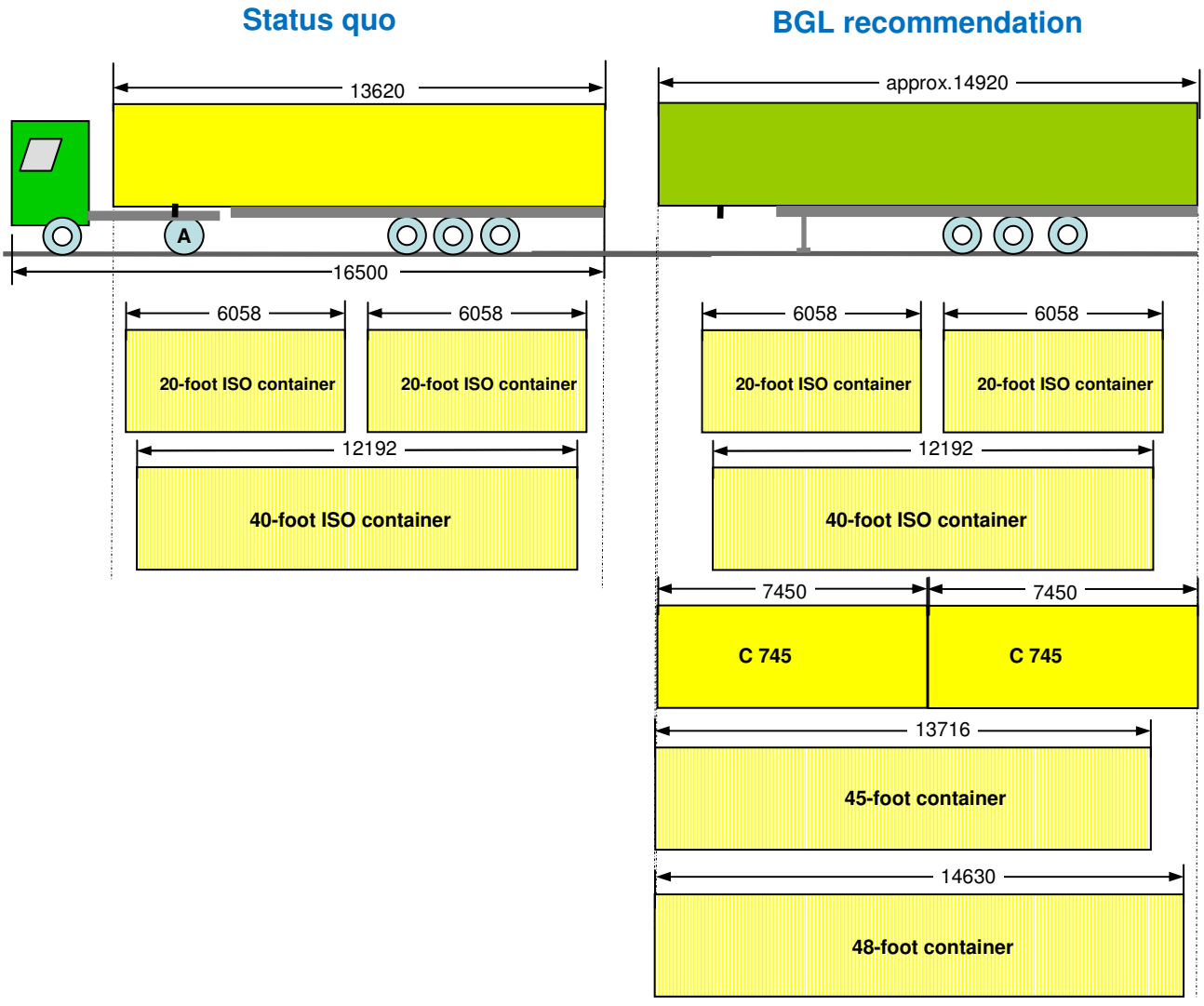


4. Adjustment of the loading length of carrier vehicles to modular dimensions

In maritime traffic, there is an increase in the proportion of 45-foot containers that replace 40-foot ISO containers. In the medium and long term, the proportion of 48-foot containers will also increase.

BGL recommendation:

For safeguarding multimodality and for the simple change of the load carriers between the modes of transport, the length of the semi-trailers should be increased from currently 13.62 m to 14.92 m. This dimension makes it possible to transport two standardized C 745 swap bodies as well as 40-foot ISO, 45-foot and 48-foot containers and to create multimodality irrespective of the carrier vehicles.



5. Laying down of the maximum authorized total weights for vehicles and vehicle combinations

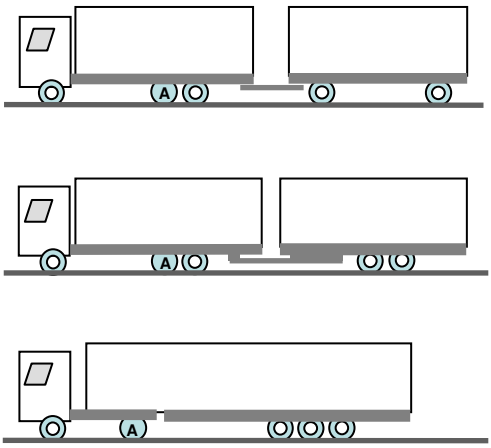
Due to infrastructural circumstances and physical laws, it has to be noted that with one driving axle (with an unmodified driving axle load of 11.5 t maximum), a maximum of 46 t of total vehicle weights can be transported including the individual modules shipped on them. Total weights exceeding 46 t require a second driving axle which BGL rejects for reasons of efficiency. Besides that, numerous European countries do not fulfill the necessary infrastructural conditions for higher total weights particularly in relation to the loads of bridges.

BGL recommendation:

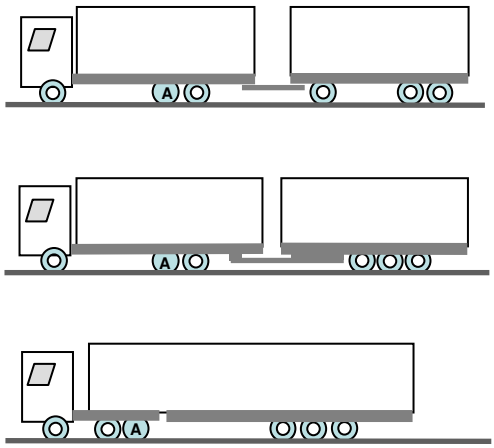
BGL recommends introducing another weight class for total weights of road trains throughout Europe. This weight class, however, should be limited to a maximum of 46 t. In order to prevent excessive road damage and a punctual overload of the driving axle, vehicle combinations with 6 axles should be used for this purpose.

In the less weight-sensitive transport sectors, vehicle combinations with 5 axles and a maximum permissible weight of up to 40 t can still be used.

MPW ≤ 40 t
(with one driving axle & at least 5 axles)



MPW ≤ 46 t
(with one driving axle & at least 6 axles)

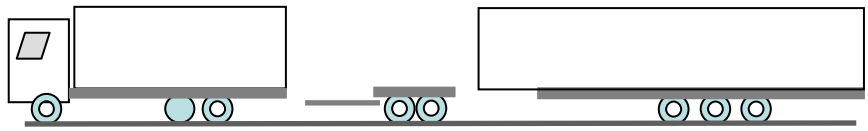


6. Combination of basic modules in European Modular Concepts

Combinations of carrier vehicles with basic modules are currently subject of a discussion as well as a driving and safety-related test. Nordic EU countries already allowed corresponding carrier vehicle combinations before entering the European Union. Here, it is important to observe infrastructural circumstances in order to avoid exceeding loads of bridges in particular. Questions concerning driving practice and safety are still open, but are regarded as answerable.

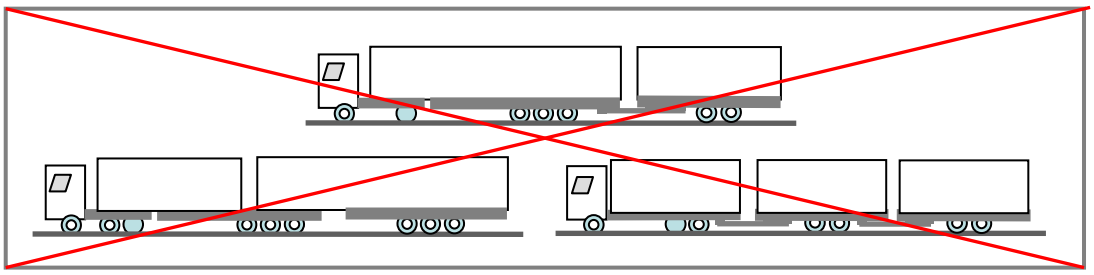
When taking into consideration technical and ecological efficiency criteria and for reasons of road safety, the only option among all the discussed vehicle concepts seems to be the combination of a motor vehicle with a coupled dolly axle and attached semi-trailer (see Fig.).

European Modular Concept



Dolly axle

For safety-related reasons, BGL rejects all the other European Modular Concepts!



BGL recommendation:

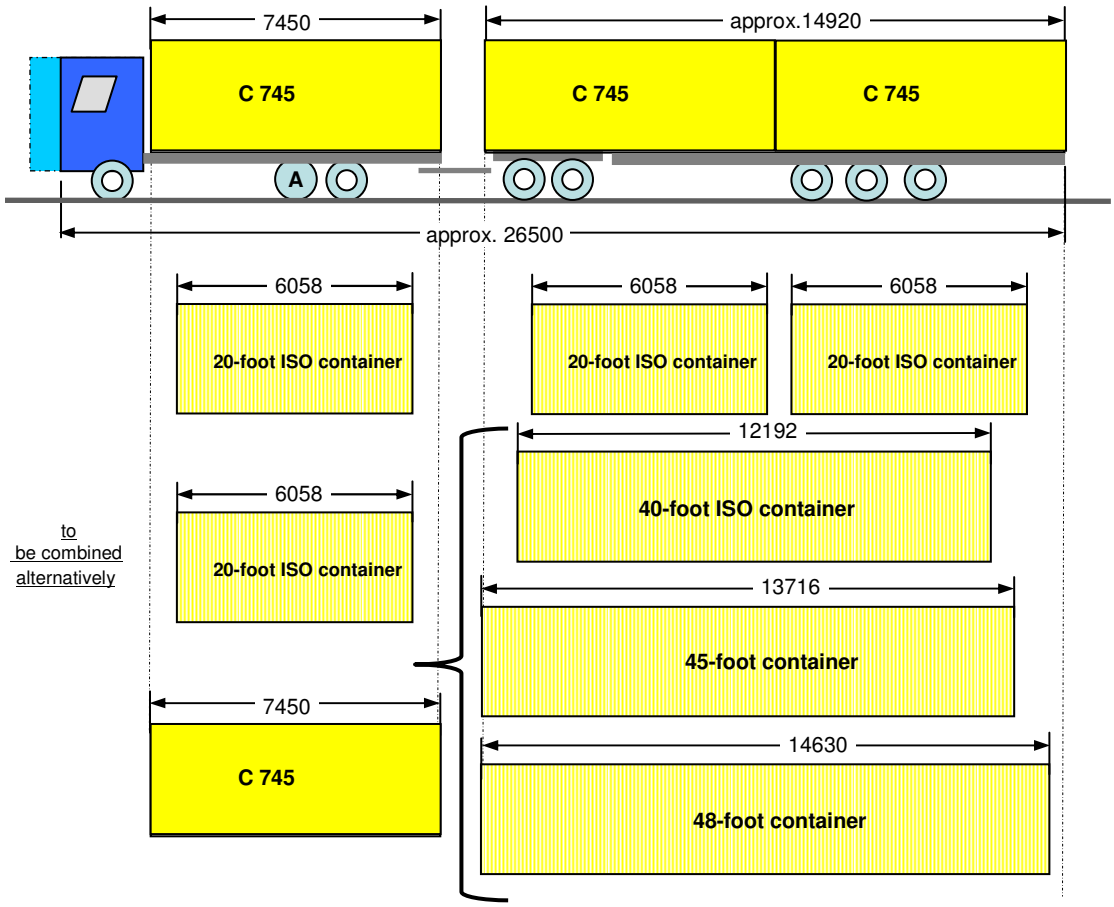
Should the Commission favor a pan-European authorization of European Modular Concepts, sufficient time to handle should be provided for in order to create the necessary infrastructural and driving safety-related preconditions.

Authorization of the combination of individual carrier vehicles with modular load units may be left to the discretion of each individual member country. Throughout the EU, the total road train weight should not exceed 46 t, with each member country being allowed to authorize higher weights in national traffic.

Authorization of the combination of individual carrier vehicles has to be compatible with the basic modular dimensions. Based on a longer semi-trailer with a length of 14.92 m, the total length of the road train sums up to approx. 26.50 m.

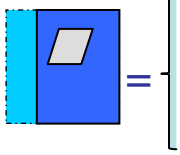
This combination of conventional carrier vehicles allows the transport of

- three C 745 swap bodies or
- three 20-foot ISO containers or
- one C 745 swap body and two 20-foot ISO containers or
- two C 745 swap bodies and one 20-foot ISO container or
- one C 745 swap body and one 40-foot ISO, 45-foot- or 48-foot container or
- one 20-foot ISO container and one 40-foot ISO, 45-foot or 48-foot container (see Fig.).



7. Dimensions of the drivers cab

For creative freedom, BGL realizes the necessity for maximum and minimum dimensions to be included in the amended directive when it comes to the drivers cab.
Besides that, these spaces for creative freedom are to provide for the integration and further development of active and passive safety equipment, thus contributing significantly to an increase in traffic safety.
In addition to that, it should be possible -for social reasons- to provide a spacious and well-equipped workplace to drivers for the special conditions in long-distance traffic. The drivers cab is to offer more space for “working and living” in long-distance trips lasting several days.
In conformity with the dimensions of basic modules (Item 3), there are variable total lengths of vehicles depending exclusively on the length of the drivers cab.



Additional lengths for drivers cab dimensions create space for a higher active and passive traffic safety and improve the working and living conditions of the driving personnel.

8. Aerodynamics

For lowering the aerodynamic drag, additional dimensional allowances might be created that are not to be attributed to the length unit of the carrier vehicle.

9. Vehicle heights

The Directive 96/53/EC in its currently valid version lays down a maximum height of 4 m. However, member countries are given the possibility to deviate from this height in national goods transports.
Particularly as far as articulated vehicles with so-called mega trailers (trailers with a clear loading height for standard loading areas of 3 m) are concerned, the requirements regarding conformity with a vehicle height of 4 m are not possible from a technical point of view. In automotive logistics, for example, a clear loading height of 3 m has become the “European logistical unit” for warehousing, transport and handling. Manufacturers and suppliers have adapted millions of wire-mesh box pallets and containers to this height dimension.

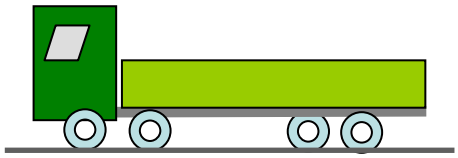
BGL recommendation:

In the interest of integrated transport concepts, a solution is necessary ensuring a pan-European harmonization of heights in compliance with practice-oriented warehouse and container systems.

10. 5-axle motor vehicles (single carrier) with an MPW of 40 t

The Directive 96/53/EC does not take into account 5-axle motor vehicles. 4-axle motor vehicles with two steering axles and a maximum permissible weight of 32 t constitute the upper limit so far.

Motor vehicle with at least 4 axles
(as per 96/53/EC in its currently valid version)



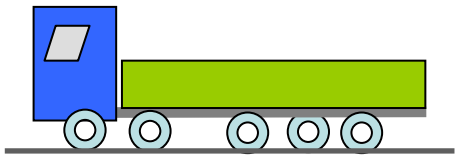
MPW: 32 t

On the other hand, several member countries allow motor vehicles with five or more axles and higher total weights for national transports. BGL is of the opinion that there are indeed attractive fields of application for vehicles with at least 5 axles (e.g. container transports, on-site traffic, bulk transports, RMC transports, mobile equipment).

BGL recommendation:

Provided that the use of these vehicle concepts does not have any unfavorable effects on roads and bridges, BGL is in favor of adopting at least 5-axle motor vehicles with an maximum permissible weight of 40 t in the Directive 96/53/EC.

Motor vehicle with at least 5 axles

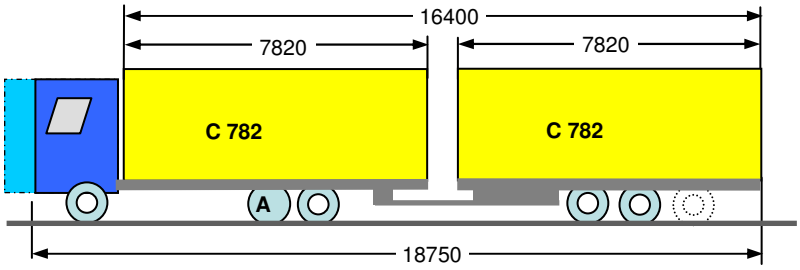


MPW: 40 t

11. Truck-trailer units

The truck-trailer unit remains the only truck-trailer combination enabling the transport of two containers of the dimensions C 782.

The truck-trailer unit is not suitable for transporting the basic modules mentioned under Item 3 and exceeding the length unit of 7.82 m.



BGL recommendation:

BGL recommends not to apply the European Modular Concept described under Item 6 to swap bodies of the dimension C 782.

If truck-trailer units exceed the maximum authorized road train weight of 40 t, six-axle truck-trailer combinations are to be used in analogy to the articulated vehicle.

12. Other modular dimensions

BGL recommends **not** to take into consideration other modular dimensions such as

• the adjustment of the loading length of the semi-trailer to the total loading length of truck-trailer units and in future

• the 53-foot container.

Adjustment of the loading length of the semi-trailer to the loading length of the truck-trailer unit