

communication on *the temporary nature of road cabotage*, the notion of ‘temporality’ was still not very clear and subject to many interpretations. This is why in 2007 EC decided to revise the rules.

European Commission **proposed the so called 3/7 rule which allows three consecutive cabotage operations for one international haulier, carried out in a period of seven days.**

After very long discussions between the European Parliament and the Member States, last month a compromise on new cabotage rules has been reached. It still needs to be formally adopted by the European Council of Ministers, but it is expected to come into force six months after its publication in the EU’s Official Journal, **that is by the end of this year.**

The details of the new rules are the following:

1. allow for 3 cabotage operations within 7 days following an international trip
2. within the limit of 3 operations, cabotage on the trip back to the country of origin is allowed, but for only 1 operation per country crossed, within 3 days following the unladen entry into the country
3. cabotage transport cannot be banned as long as it is not performed on permanent or ongoing basis
4. by the end of 2013, EC needs to present a report to determine whether the conditions (social in particular) are fulfilled to consider further opening of domestic markets

Impact on the sector:

It is too early to consider the impact of the new rules. On a macroeconomic scale, the new rules most probably won’t have too many consequences, because cabotage is a small scale activity. According to Eurostat, the share accounted for by cabotage out of all the road transport services provided remains very low (mere 3%). Cabotage is of considerable importance only for hauliers from smaller Member States (such as the Benelux countries) and in trans-border regions.

The fact that some countries (Austria, Germany, Spain, France) were for restricting cabotage in the final negotiations is mainly related to the current crisis. As soon as there is enough work for everyone there should also be some scope for cabotage again.