

Minister for Transport, Stephen Hammond's response to the final report from the Stakeholder Working Group: EU drivers' hours and working time rules

As part of both the Logistics Growth Review and the Red Tape Challenge the Department agreed to work with industry to look into whether there was scope to simplify the regime covering EU drivers' hours and working time; with the aim of discussing this with other Member States and the European Commission.

An industry Stakeholder Working Group was set up to look into this issue last year and the Group submitted its final report to me in January with a number of recommendations on the way forward. A copy of the report can be viewed on our website.

Having read the Group's final report, I agree that it would not be beneficial to re-open negotiations at European level and agree with the Group's recommended way forward. I have asked my officials to work with industry and the trade unions to draft additional simplified guidance to supplement the current VOSA guidance, focussing on those aspects of the rules which cause most confusion, and to also consider how these will be disseminated.

In addition, following the Group's recommendations, I have asked that VOSA (now DVSA) pursue a couple of issues of concern at European level.

I have noted the discussions of the Group about creating a simpler set of domestic regulations covering working time rules, which would meet EU requirements. However, any attempt to do so would result in a less flexible system than we have at present, which would not be appropriate for all business models and so would place increased burdens on business. I have therefore decided to preserve the flexibility in our domestic regulations, allowing UK businesses to compete with Europe on equal terms.

I would like to thank all the Members of the Group and their organisations for the work they have put into looking at this complicated issue and for their considered recommendations. I also appreciate the commitment to continue to work together to draft simplified guidance, which I believe will help drivers better understand the rules, making compliance easier.

January 2014