

'Aeroplane flaps' on lorries to save lives in Europe

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Lorries in a traffic jam on the E411 dual-carriageway in Sterpenich, Belgium, October 2005. Rolling out round-nosed lorries with aeroplane-style flaps at the back on Europe's roads would cut fuel costs, reduce carbon emissions and save lives, while giving a boost to the struggling auto sector, the European Commission said Monday.

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"A brick is the least aerodynamic shape you can imagine, that's why we need to improve the shape of our lorries on the roads," said Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas, calling for a change to 1996 specifications for heavy goods vehicles.

Brussels argues that aerodynamic lorries would cut fuel-guzzling and [greenhouse gas emissions](#) by up to 10 percent while improving a driver's field of vision, saving hundreds of lives of vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians.

A typical long-distance lorry covering 100,000

kilometres (60,000 miles) a year would save 5,000 euros in fuel annually, Kallas said.

So the new rounded trucks would be particularly profitable for the one million—of the 6.5 million on Europe's roads - that regularly travel [long distances](#).

With road transport accounting for more than 70 percent of inland freight in Europe, a change in the specifications would also "give European manufacturers a head-start in designing the truck of the future," Kallas said.

The EU executive's proposal must be adopted by the [European Parliament](#) and the 27 European Union members before becoming law, meaning the new trucks could be on roads by 2018-2020 if the rules are agreed.

The proposals made no mention of allowing so-called 'gigatrucks' or 'megatrucks'—somewhat like Australia's fabled road-trains which can have two or even three trailers in tow. Kallas last year said the use of longer vehicles was a matter for each member state.

In January, Brussels set new rules to ensure that trucks and buses rolling off assembly lines this year will produce significantly less harmful exhaust fumes.

The European Commission said the new norms, known as Euro VI and replacing standards set in 2008, will cut nitrogen oxide emissions by 80 percent and particulates by 66 percent.

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