
08. July 2026

# European trailer manufacturers unite in Lier

The CEOs of 30 leading European trailer manufacturers met in Koningshooikt last week near Lier and signed a joint declaration and petition in the presence of the two Members of the European Parliament Kris Van Dijck (Belgium) and Jens Gieseke (Germany). They call on the European Commission and the European Parliament to review and adjust Regulation (EU) 2024/1610. Companies that normally compete for the same customers and contracts spoke with one voice: they support the EU’s climate targets, but warn that the rules as designed could increase $CO_2$ emissions rather than cut them.

## The problem

Regulation (EU) 2024/1610 extends $CO_2$ standards to trailers, even though trailers emit no $CO_2$ directly. Manufacturers are held responsible for simulated emissions calculated by the VECTO tool, which relies on standardized reference loads and duty cycles. The signatories argue this methodology does not reflect the operational realities of European road transport: the diversity of trailer applications, real payload and loading requirements, or the rapid rise of zero-emission tractor units.

Their central warning is that, to meet the targets, manufacturers could be pushed toward design changes that reduce usable loading capacity. The result would be more trips, more empty runs, and more vehicles on the road to move the same volume of goods — and therefore more $CO_2$, not less. From 2030, an exceedance premium of €4,250 per $gCO_2$/tkm above target, multiplied by each registered vehicle, would expose manufacturers to annual penalties in the millions. Around 70,000 jobs across Europe depend on an economically viable trailer industry.

## What the signatories demand

The petition sets out five requests:

**Bring the Article 15 review forward from 2027 to 2026.** Publish the reference values immediately after monitoring and lower the fleet targets to achievable levels, for example 5 percent from 2030, phased in.

**Phase in the fleet targets from 1 July 2030** to avoid market distortions and foreseeable job losses.

**Introduce a moratorium on penalties** and adjust the penalty level, which is out of all proportion to the market price of the vehicles.

**Overhaul the VECTO tool for trailers** so vehicles with comparable purpose are compared fairly and the growing share of zero-emission tractors is taken into account. Targets and levies should fall in line with the market penetration of zero-emission tractors and disappear entirely once these reach a 70 percent market share.

**Recognize that the planned credit-and-debit system is largely ineffective** within the current timeframe, because the necessary trailer technologies cannot reach the market at scale fast enough.

## Quotes

“Decarbonization must not become deindustrialization. The answer is not to abandon climate ambition. It is to make sure our policies are based on reality, on technology that exists, and on outcomes that can actually be achieved. That is why I support a serious review of the current methodology, not because we want weaker rules, but because we want rules that reduce emissions and strengthen European industry,” said MEP Kris Van Dijck.

“European industry cannot be told to lead the green transition while we make it impossible to compete. The trailer sector is ready to deliver, but the targets have to be technically achievable. We need an evidence-based review now, in 2026 — not in 2027, when the damage may already be done,” said MEP Jens Gieseke.

“Today thirty competitors put their rivalry aside to send Brussels a single message. We are not asking for less climate protection. We are asking for rules that cut emissions instead of penalizing manufacturers for a flawed simulation. The Article 15 review must be brought forward — every month of delay costs investment, jobs, and credibility,” said Gero Schulze Isfort, spokesman for the German coalition of eight leading European trailer manufacturers.

## Signatories

The joint declaration and petition were signed by the CEOs of 30 European trailer manufacturers.

**If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.:**
**SIMON RICHENHAGEN**
Phone +49 5951 209-8216 · E-mail: simon.richenhagen@krone.de