

## SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL IN ROAD FREIGHT TRANSPORT

**CLIENT:** *European Parliament, Directorate General for Structural and Cohesion Policies*

**YEAR:** 2008 - 2009

### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES:

TRT Trasporti e Territorio, in cooperation with IRS Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale, was in charge of this study on behalf of the Directorate General for Structural and Cohesion Policies of the European Parliament, in order to provide the Members of the Committee on Transport and Tourism with useful background information related to the road freight transport sector, in the light of the structural issue of qualified driver shortage.

It is acknowledged that driving is today a highly demanding profession, since it has developed from the simple “driving” activity to a more specific set of working tasks resulting from the striking changes which have occurred, in the first place, by new logistics services and needs. These changes have entailed new schemes in the organisation of work, now far more codified and standardised than they used to be.

Thus, the observed shortage of drivers is not only a matter of scarcity of labour supply, but, above all, of scarcity of a qualified, skilled and reliable workforce. Hence, the shortage problem assumes the form of labour mismatch, where the competences and skills required by firms do not tally (in general being higher) with those offered by the workers.

Finally, the last decade has seen the coming into force of various measures in EU legislation which have given a new shape to road transport, so as to further improve its efficiency, safety, security and environmental protection level.

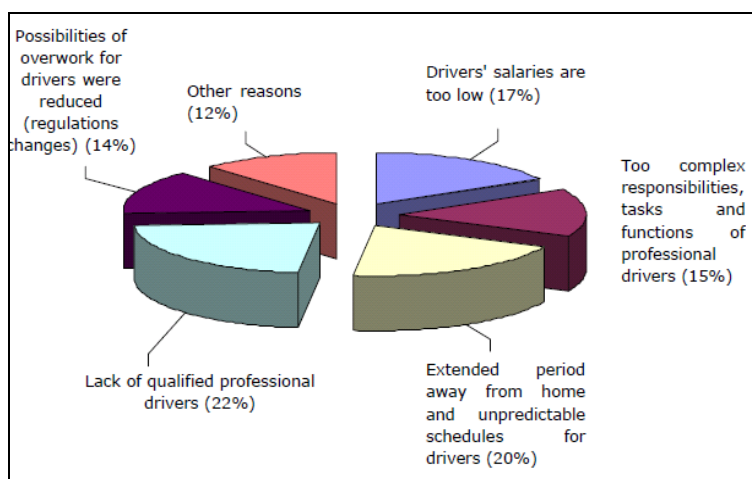
Purpose of the study was, then, to analyse the multiplicity of factors affecting labour supply and demand, by taking into due consideration also the impacts of the current EU legislation and the effects of the economic downturn that occurred in 2008.

### Main conclusions

The shortage of drivers has been determined mainly by a considerable and steady increase in the demand for freight transport by road and especially of long-distance haulage, although it is also linked to other causes related to the supply side and to a possible mismatch between the competences required by companies and those offered by the labour force.

Within this framework, the main issues that should be targeted to tackle the problem of shortage of qualified personnel in the road freight transport – specifically drivers – were suggested as follows.

- **Skills and qualifications.** Facilitate attainment of professional and specific driving competences, strengthening the link between the educational system and the labour market.
- **Working conditions and job attractiveness.** Improve working conditions and job attractiveness, by increasing the number of truck parking areas and enhancing their comfort and security, by harmonising regulations and penalties across EU countries, and by increasing integration between employers’ and employees’ needs and objectives.
- **Women’s participation.** Encourage the access of women to the occupation of driver by promoting gender-oriented measures and by increasing road safety and rest facilities and reducing discrimination.
- **Logistics and organisation.** Increase labour efficiency, improve logistics and organisation management, increase the use of alternative transport modes.



*Reasons for driver shortage (IRU, 2007)*