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Title	THE IMPACT OF MARKET STRUCTURE ON INTERNATIONAL HEAVY GOODS VEHICLE ROAD SAFETY: EXPLORATORY FINDINGS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION 2010-2011		
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Abstract

The amount of road freight in the European Union totaled nearly 1900 billion ton-kilometers in 2008. This underlines the dominant role of road transport since it accounts for approximately 76.5% of the transport modal breakdown in Europe. However, as a consequence of the financial crisis in 2008 freight volumes have severely plunged: in the Baltic Sea Region the international road freight transport of goods including cabotage decreased by 21.5 % between 2008 and 2009.

The financial development of road freight transport has caught a fair share of attention, but its effects on international heavy goods vehicle (HGV) road safety has not been thoroughly discussed. While most of the research on road safety has concentrated on the behavior of the driver as a safety factor of transportation, the market conditions and financial stability of the companies has been less discussed. On this basis the objective of this study is to investigate how the market structure changes between 2005-2006 and 2010 have affected international HGV road safety in the BSR.

The theoretical framework of the study consists of a detailed review on the generic forces which shape industry competition and on the regulatory framework of international HGV safety. The effects of market concentration and the increase of subcontracting related to it are further discussed. In the empirical part of the study there are two cross case analyses: one compares the findings from the interviews of Finnish firms (Case Group A) and Finnish competent authorities (Case Group B) and the other one compares the results between Finnish competent authorities (Case Group B) and Estonian competent authorities (Case Group C).

The findings of the study indicate that although the global financial crisis has severely altered the balance between HGV freight transport demand and supply, practitioners and authorities agree that the level of road safety has not deteriorated significantly between 2005-2006 and 2010 in BSR. However, cut-throat competition and the pressure of powerful buyers are perceived as potential safety risks which may lead to the negligence of undertakings in safety related issues. In addition interviewees claimed that the harmonization of penalties for committed infringements as well as specific cargo securing guidelines should be ranked high on the international HGV road freight agenda in Europe.

Key words	Traffic safety, market, competition, heavy traffic, Baltic Sea Region
Further information	