



The world's largest contest for young truck drivers gets under way – the reigning champion challenged by 20,000 colleagues

“The professional driver is the most important asset when it comes to the safety of heavy vehicles in traffic and as a manufacturer, we take responsibility for supporting the driver in every way.”

These are the words of Leif Östling, President and CEO of Scania, as he commented on the qualifying rounds of Scania's traffic safety initiative, the 2005 Young European Truck Driver competition. At least 20,000 young truck drivers from 26 European countries are expected to participate.

All round Europe, Scania is now selecting the contestants for the regional qualifiers which will lead to the national finals. The winner from each country will secure a place in the European final in Sweden on 16-17 September. One of the finalists has already been decided: Michele Sandri from Trento in northern Italy, who qualified directly since he is the current title-holder.

With this focus on young drivers, Scania aims to help secure the European Union goal of halving the number of traffic fatalities by 2010. Statistics for 2002 show that just over 37,000 people were killed in road accidents within the EU's previously 15 member states.

“What is more, we also want to enhance the status of the professional driver and his or her vital role in both traffic-safety measures and the haulage firm's operations”, explains Leif Östling.

The Young European Truck Driver competition is aimed at all professional heavy truck drivers born in 1970 or later. The competition is held in the European Union's member states as well as in Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. The focus is on traffic safety and fuel economy.

The competition encompasses both theoretical and practical tests in line with the EU's directive on compulsory driver training. The purpose of this new directive is to introduce training for professional drivers that focuses on safe driving and improves drivers' safety standards, which in turn will have a positive knock-on effect not just on the transport sector in particular but also on society in general.

Scania runs the competition with support from the European Commission and the IRU (International Road Transport Union), and with sponsorship from Michelin and Shell.

The first time the Young European Truck Driver contest was carried out was in 2003, when 6,000 drivers from 20 European countries took part. More than

30,000 truck drivers were reached by the campaign, and seminars on traffic safety attracted more than 250 journalists from all over Europe.

In parallel with Young European Truck Driver 2005, Scania is planning to carry out a similar traffic safety initiative during the year in both Asia and South America.

Caption:

At the finals of the Young European Truck Driver contest in Sweden on 16-17 September, current champion Michele Sandri from Italy will defend his title against professional drivers from almost 30 European countries.

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Scania is one of the world's leading manufacturers of trucks and buses for heavy transport applications, and of industrial and marine engines. With 30,000 employees and production facilities in Europe and Latin America, Scania is one of the most profitable companies in its sector. In 2004, sales totalled SEK 56.7 billion and income after financial items was SEK 6.0 billion. Scania products are marketed in about 100 countries worldwide and some 95 percent of Scania's vehicles are sold outside Sweden.

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