



By email

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Brussels, 25 March 2020

CORONAVIRUS AND ITS IMPACT ON EU SUPPLY CHAINS AND MOBILITY NETWORKS – CONCERTED ACTION NEEDED.

Dear,

In these difficult times, our thoughts go out to those who are working hard to fight the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Part of the fight, and immediate concern, is to ensure supply chains remain functional.

Movements of goods have significantly reduced due to the general slowdown of the economic activity in the EU as a result of health and safety measures. **The remaining movements are crucial to ensure continuity of essential supplies, such as food and medical goods.**

IRU, the world road transport organisation representing the voice of 3.5 million transport operating companies, including in all EU Member States, has been carefully monitoring the situation in the EU and is evaluating the impact on commercial road transport. The situation of freight continuity continues to deteriorate and the reason is obvious: **border blockages.**

We need your help as concerted action by Member States is indispensable to ensure the integrity of logistics chains. Newly created borders in the Schengen space should not lead to control measures which seriously hinder the flow of goods and prevent us from delivering food, water and medical supplies to citizens around Europe. Tens of kilometres of queues and many hours of waiting at borders as we observe them every day are not acceptable.

An emergency Transport Council took place on 18 March to discuss COVID-19 measures. However, the concrete coordinated measures our sector expected did not emerge from that meeting. Just a general statement that freight corridors should be kept open is not enough. On 23 March the European Commission issued practical guidance on the implementation of green lanes for freight transport, now governments have to implement them. Hence, concrete action is needed now. We know by experience that allowing for up to 15 minutes to cross borders is leading to days of queues in reality. Trucks are stuck at external EU borders for 2-3 days, although customs procedures only take 2-3 minutes per vehicle.

Our urgent call to you therefore is to implement “Green Lanes” without delay and abandon any systematic border controls for goods transported by road.

Random inspections or road-side checks should be proportionate and moved inland wherever possible only when and deemed necessary. Priority must be given to support drivers with access to safety protection equipment, safe and secure resting and recreation facilities and free Covid-19 testing upon request.

Distinguishing between categories of freight is not appropriate nor needed. Therefore, in line with the European Commission practical guidance on the implementation of green lanes, we ask to not differentiate between categories of freight.

Green Lanes for freight should also mean no additional administrative documents or special certificates demanded from drivers. A patchwork of different nationally valid forms and papers will not lead to more safety but just block drivers for a long time at borders, which makes social distancing more difficult to implement practically, and prevents deliveries from arriving in time.

IRU and its members stand ready to provide the European Commission and your government with any practical advice and guidance to ensure that, as a global community, we effectively tackle this pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

Radu Dinescu
President

Umberto de Pretto
Secretary General