

## COVID-19 | Transport keeps us going

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 a pandemic and governments worldwide have taken wide-ranging measures to contain the spread of the virus.

The transport sector has a crucial role to play in the supply of goods, in particular medicines, medical devices, food and other essential commodities needed to overcome this crisis. The transport sector also proves to be a vital instrument in these times where many European citizens are restricted in their mobility.

The undersigned European associations representing transport, infrastructure managers, operators, workers in all transport modes and logistics, contractors, local and regional authorities, logistics service providers, shippers, users and equipment suppliers in the maritime, port, inland waterways, railways, road, cycling, aviation and intermodal sectors, as well as supporting industries and companies, jointly endorse the following statement:

- Highlight the key role transport and logistics are playing for the supply of essential goods in this critical period: stress that transport infrastructure is in this respect critical infrastructure;
- Show their respect and support to all workers in the supply chain enabling the continuity of transport services, the movement of goods and essential commodities, as well as the repatriation of stranded citizens, and thus playing a major role in helping the European citizens to overcome this crisis;
- Call on the Member States to enable smooth border crossings for freight transport, both intra-EU and with third countries, in this respect fully support the establishment of green freight lanes in coordination with the concerned transport stakeholders;
- Support the measures and actions taken on EU-level and by national governments to contain the spread of COVID-19 and call on the Member States to coordinate their response to the COVID-19 and to follow the European Commission's guidelines on border management;
- Reiterate the importance of protecting the health and safety of transport workers, notably through personal protective equipment, as well as access to clean and disinfected sanitary facilities, food and drinks;
- Highlight that the transport and logistics sectors are based on a physical work force and call on the European Commission and the Member States to facilitate its mobility, including repatriation of the transport work force;
- Urge the policy makers to assist the heavily affected transport sector in its recovery, to ensure future connectivity for both passengers and freight, and to revitalise the arteries of the internal market as soon as the crisis is over.



**A4E** – Airlines for Europe; **AIM** – European Brands Association; **ALICE** – European Technology Platform; **BPO** – Baltic Ports Organisation; **ARDAN** – Solutions for innovation; **CER** – Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies; **CLECAT** – European Association for Forwarding, Transport, Logistics and Customs Services; **COCERAL** – European association for trade in cereals, rice, feedstuffs, oilseeds, olive oil, oils and fats and agrosupply; **EBU** – European Barge Union; **ECASBA** – European Community Association of Shipbrokers and Agents; **ECSA** – European Community Shipowners' Associations; **EFIP** – European Federation of Inland Ports; **EIM** – European Rail Infrastructure Managers; **EMPA** – European Maritime Pilots' Association; **ERFA** – European Rail Freight Association; **ESC** – European Shippers' Council; **ESO** – European Skippers' Organisation; **ESPO** – European Sea Ports Organisation; **ETF** – European Transport Workers' Federation; **EuDA** – European Dredging Association; **FEPORT** – Federation of Private Port Operators and Terminals; **FERRMED** – Association to improve Railfreight Transportation; **FTA** – Leading UK logistics; **INE** – Inland Navigation Europe; **IWI** – Inland Waterways International; **IWT** – European Inland Waterway Transport Platform; **POLIS** – European Cities and Regions Networking for Innovative Transport Solutions; **SEA EUROPE** – the voice of civil and naval (maritime technology) industries in Europe; **UETR** – European Road Haulers Association; **UIP** – International Union of Wagon Keepers; **UIRR** – International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport; **UNIFE** – The European Rail Supply Industry Association; **UNISTOCK** – European association of professional portside storekeepers for agribulk commodities.





## Coronavirus: Commission presents practical guidance to ensure continuous flow of goods across EU via green lanes

Brussels, 23 March 2020

Today, the Commission issued new practical advice on how to implement its Guidelines for border management, in order to keep freight moving across the EU during the current pandemic. To ensure that EU-wide supply chains continue to operate, Member States are requested to designate, without delay, all the [relevant internal border-crossing points on the trans-European transport network \(TEN-T\)](#) as 'green lane' border crossings. The green lane border crossings should be open to all freight vehicles, whatever goods they are carrying. Crossing the border, including any checks and health screening, should not take more than 15 minutes.

Commissioner for Transport Adina **Vălean** said: *"The EU's transport network connects the whole of the EU. Our guidance document is intended to protect the EU's supply chains in these difficult circumstances, and to make sure both goods and transport workers are able to travel to wherever they are needed – without delay. A collective and coordinated approach to cross-border transport is more important today than ever before. The green lanes are also specifically designed to protect transport workers at the frontline of this crisis. This set of recommendations will ease their already stressful mission and it will bring more safety and predictability to their work."*

### Green lane border crossings

Procedures at green lane border crossings should be minimised and streamlined to what is strictly necessary. Checks and screening should be carried out without drivers having to leave their vehicles, and drivers themselves should undergo only minimal checks. Drivers of freight vehicles should not be asked to produce any document other than their identification and driving license and if necessary a letter from the employer. The electronic submission/display of documents should be accepted.

No freight vehicle or driver should face discrimination, irrespective of origin and destination, the driver's nationality or the vehicle's country of registration.

In light of the current situation, Member States are also urged to temporarily suspend all road access restrictions currently in place in their territory, such as weekend, night and sectoral bans.

The Commission encourages Member States to set up safe passage transit corridors to allow private drivers and their passengers, such as health and transport workers, as well as EU citizens being repatriated, regardless of their nationality, to directly pass with priority through the country in each necessary direction along the TEN-T Network. This should be done while staying strictly on the designated route and to take the necessary minimum rest breaks. Member States should ensure that they have at least one airport functional for repatriation and international relief flights.

### Enhanced cooperation among EU Member States and beyond

Following the video-conference between EU Transport Ministers on 18 March, the Commission set up a network of national contact points and a [platform](#) to provide information on national transport measures taken by Member States in response to the coronavirus. The national contact points should support the effective functioning of the green lane border crossing points. Neighbouring non-EU countries are invited to work closely with this network to ensure the flow of goods in all directions.

### Application of rules for transport workers

To keep transport moving, the Commission recommends that Member States take action to ensure the free movement of all workers involved in international transport, whatever the transport mode. In particular, rules such as travel restrictions, and mandatory quarantine of transport workers not displaying symptoms, should be waived. For example, Member States should not require that transport workers carry a doctor's certificate to prove their good health. To ensure the safety of transport workers, [enhanced hygiene and operational measures are also needed in airports, ports, railway stations and other land transport hubs](#). Today's note from the Commission includes a full list of recommendations to protect drivers from the coronavirus (Annex 2).

Internationally recognised certificates of professional competence should be considered sufficient to prove that a worker is active in international transport. In the absence of such certificates (not all

international drivers have one), a letter signed by the employer (Annex 3) should be accepted.

All of these principles should also apply to third country nationals if they are essential to ensuring that cargo moves freely within and into the EU.

### **Background**

The coronavirus pandemic is having a major disruptive impact on European transport and mobility. The European supply chain is maintained through an extensive network of freight transport services, including all modes of transport. Continued and uninterrupted land, waterborne and air cargo services are of crucial importance for the functioning of the EU's internal market and its effective response to the current public health crisis.

### **More Information**

[European Commission Communication on the implementation of the Green Lanes of the Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services](#)

[Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services](#)

[European Commission's response to the Coronavirus](#)

[Overview of national measures by country](#)

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