

AG/GE4316/JHU

Geneva, 11 April 2016

IRU Resolution on “Uncontrolled migration and international refugee crisis”

Adopted unanimously by the IRU General Assembly in Geneva on 8 April 2016

IRU Resolution on uncontrolled migration and the international refugee crisis, and addressing its impact on the road transport industry.

The International Road Transport Union (IRU), representing bus, coach, taxi and truck operators through its national Member Associations in over 100 countries across all five continents,

Emphasises that:

Today’s migration crisis is a worldwide humanitarian, social, political and economic challenge for governments, international organisations and society as a whole;

Such challenges can be positively influenced by securing political stability, ending proxy wars and improving the living conditions of people in their home country;

Uncontrolled migration, coupled with illegal immigration, often supported by organised human trafficking networks, causes dramatic and unacceptable human suffering and disrupts national socio-economic development and security.

Notes that:

Illegal immigrants, often exploited by organised human trafficking networks, seek all forms of transportation options, often in desperation, to reach their country of destination;

International commercial freight and passenger transport vehicles are increasingly targeted by such uncontrolled migration and illegal immigration;

The practice of illegal immigrants, stowing away on trucks unbeknown to drivers, to cross borders unnoticed, is rising dramatically. This practice is dangerous for illegal immigrants, and in many cases can damage the goods and the vehicle;

Illegal immigrants are using forged ID documents on international scheduled coach services, where the driver has no knowledge, conditions nor power to exercise effective control;

Commercial vehicle drivers and transport operators are often assumed to be guilty by authorities when illegal immigrants are found onboard their vehicles and have to prove their innocence or face civil or criminal penalties. Therefore, many drivers are reluctant to work in hot spots.

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Underlines that:

The road transport industry plays a crucial role in dealing with migration by helping bring aid to organised refugee camps and legally transporting migrants where needed and requested by competent authorities, as well as through establishing advocacy initiatives, practical tools and due diligence;

The road transport industry is confronted with great economic and social consequences due to uncontrolled migration and international refugees;

The road transport industry is constantly informing and alerting competent authorities and politicians of these consequences, and also of the ongoing practices by illegal immigrants and the impact on the road transport sector with very limited reaction and consequent action;

Transport operators are confronted with ever increasing disproportionately high penalties for non-deliberate involvement in people smuggling and thus, ultimately, being held responsible for the negligence of enforcement authorities;

The road transport sector cannot take over the role of the state when dealing with uncontrolled migration and improperly documented passengers.

Calls on governments to:

Work together in a more coordinated and rapid manner at an inter-governmental level and ensure that their enforcement authorities take joint action to effectively address the immense problem of migration and illegal immigration;

Increase security to protect drivers, passengers, vehicles and loads in critical areas;

Ensure that supply chains and mobility chains are not disrupted by increasing border and terminal waiting times related to the rise in controls resulting from the migration crisis;

Refrain from penalising transport operators who have exercised due diligence and/or have undertaken preventive security measures to prohibit illegal immigrants and/or improperly documented passengers boarding vehicles;

Upgrade legislation to implement an official zero-tolerance approach when prosecuting those actively involved in illegal human trafficking;

Stay in a constant dialogue with the road transport industry and inform, in good time, the professional transport and travel community of any measures they are planning to introduce at borders which affect the free and smooth movement of goods and passengers.

Calls on transport operators to:

Provide support to authorities where possible;

Implement best practices which specify recommended measures and procedures for road transport operators and their drivers to minimise risks related to their operations.

Calls on competent national and international enforcement authorities to:

Effectively implement existing laws and control practices to protect drivers and vehicles, whilst allowing for flexible interpretation of rules related to, for example, permits and driving and rest time when transport operators are forced to change their route due to border closures;

Provide regular information to drivers, transport companies and service clients on the measures against uncontrolled migration, including reinforcement or reintroduction of border controls;

Work actively in cooperation with road transport operators and drivers in taking appropriate preventive measures and recognise their efforts;

Consider and give preference to the presence of competent control agencies at international scheduled coach service terminals, rather than multiplying controls en route;

Develop secure zones, including parking areas, and increased patrols at hot spots and severely affected areas;

Effectively combat Illegal immigration by competent national authorities tackling human trafficking perpetrated by organised criminal gangs.

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