

Mr Radu Dinescu
President of the International Road Transport Union (IRU)
71 avenue de Cortenbergh
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- by email -

Subject: Coronavirus and its impact on the EU supply chains and mobility networks

Your ref.: Letter of 20 March 2020 – by email
Our ref.: G 33/2542.1/29 (COVID-19)
Date: Berlin, 24 April 2020
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Dear President Dinescu,

Thank you for your letter of 20 March 2020. I share your assessment that high priority must be given to maintaining and stabilizing the movement of goods. We must ensure the supply of basic goods to the population and make it as smooth as possible.

You have good reason to call for a consistent implementation of the European Commission's Communication on the establishment of "Green Lanes". This EU initiative met with the support of the European heads of state and government and the transport ministers of the European Union (EU). I was among those who explicitly welcomed it. A network of national points of contact established throughout the EU is to promote and coordinate its implementation. Germany is making an active contribution to this endeavour.

Our approach in Germany is based on the following principles:

1. We want to maintain a functioning infrastructure to guarantee supply and logistics operations. We are looking into possibilities for physically and organizationally separating different transport operations at the temporarily reactivated check points at internal EU borders and have already implemented some of them. If necessary, further measures can be implemented, taking local conditions into account.
2. Journeys for job-related purposes remain possible. However, the citizens have been called upon to refrain from non-essential trips to slow the spread of COVID-19 infections.
3. The operation of critical transport infrastructure and services, such as air navigation services, the railway network or locks will be ensured.
4. Airports and ports are kept open, in particular to transship freight and safeguard supply chains for the continuous supply of goods. Travellers must be given the possibility to return to their place of residence.
5. We are facilitating the required increase in flexibility in the application of traffic regulations, such as the driving times and rest periods, the ban on driving on

Sundays and public holidays as well as the ban on night-time flying. At the same time, we are taking a tolerant approach, or rather encourage the competent federal state authorities to do so, when carrying out checks, especially with regard to exceeded deadlines for recurrent qualification and training, regular vehicle inspections or roadworthiness. Here, close coordination between Member States and the European Commission as well as mutual recognition of measures taken at national level are of vital importance.

6. In order to mitigate the negative economic impact, the Federal Government has adopted a comprehensive aid package including emergency aid for small enterprises and an economic stability fund to secure the liquidity of businesses. This aid benefits the transport sector, too.

I very much welcome the fact that the European Commission reiterated, in its Communication on the free movement of workers, the necessity to ensure the transport workers' ability to move freely across borders, since it is particularly in this regard that national measures adversely affected the flow of goods in the last few days.

Together with the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, Germany is, moreover, making every effort to ensure the smooth movement of goods across borders along the TEN-T network. Where necessary, freight transport operations will be given priority at German border-crossing points.

However, I also share your opinion that there is further need to coordinate national measures even better at EU level. I have therefore contacted the current Croatian EU Council Presidency and the EU Commissioner for Transport and urged them to convene a second extraordinary EU Transport Council as soon as possible to discuss the topic of ensuring the flow of goods and safeguarding supply chains again and find solutions to the existing problems.

I am convinced that we can only overcome this crisis and mitigate the negative impact on the single European transport area if we act jointly and in a coordinated manner.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Andreas Scheuer