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### **Prioritise passage and protect blocked truck drivers in Ukraine crisis.**

Current events in and around Ukraine have shown again the vulnerability of professional truck, bus and coach drivers in times of crisis, especially at borders.

The situation is evolving rapidly, but IRU estimates that at least 12,000 truck drivers are currently stuck in Ukraine and the wider region. Many are waiting to transit into the EU, including drivers of many nationalities who were in the middle of routine deliveries yesterday in Ukraine. Borders between Ukraine and EU countries are open, however long queues are reported and drivers face an estimated wait of 2-4 days to cross. The Ukrainian-Belarus border is currently closed, obliging many drivers to reroute. Some drivers, fearing crossfire, are abandoning their trucks in Ukraine.

Truck drivers are also stuck on both sides of the Russian-Ukrainian border some caught up in crossfire there. Information from this region is less clear.

Drivers of many nationalities are caught up in the crisis. As one example, at least 600 Turkish truck drivers are stuck in Ukraine and Russia trying to return to Turkey. RoRo ferries crossing the Black Sea from Ukraine to Turkey were turned back or cancelled yesterday and drivers are attempting to return via the EU. Ukraine's Black Sea ports are still closed. Turkish drivers are also stranded in Russia, some attempting to return via Georgia, facing 7-10 day delays at the Russian-Georgian border.

As seen with COVID restrictions, blocked drivers are once again facing poor facilities, security threats, and lack of food, water and sanitary facilities. IRU understands that authorities, including the European Commission and some EU member states, have signalled support for visa and permit waivers for some drivers. Nevertheless, much more needs to be done and greater clarity is needed.

IRU therefore calls on all relevant authorities in the region to:

- Temporarily waive visa and permit requirements, or rapidly provide transit visas, for commercial drivers of all nationalities attempting to return home via alternative routes
- Ensure rapid border passage for commercial vehicles
- Temporarily waive driving, rest or working time rules for returning drivers if needed
- Provide humanitarian facilities for stranded drivers

IRU is continuing to monitor the situation on the ground closely with our member associations to support the many transport operators and drivers caught up in the crisis.



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