

President of the European Parliament
President of the European Commission
Croatian Presidency

March 30, 2020

*Dear President of the European Parliament, Dear President of the European Commission,
Dear Presidency,*

On 18 March, during our High-Level Video Conference on the implications of COVID-19 on transport, we all agreed that ensuring the free flow of goods to all parts of the EU is a priority and that transport undertakings are among the most affected by the outbreak of the pandemic.

The unprecedented spread of the coronavirus, already impacts, and will, unfortunately, continue to affect the road transport sector profoundly. It is expected that most important undertakings will suspend or close down operations, which will lead to a significant reduction in the supply of transport services and, therefore, delivery of goods to the detriment of the EU citizens and the smooth functioning of the economy.

Bearing in mind that the EU will most probably experience a serious economic slowdown in 2020, if not a deep recession, and the unquestionable role of international road transport sector for the EU economy, we would like to draw your attention to ongoing legislative process of the first Mobility Package.

The vast majority of road transport companies in the European Union are small and medium-size enterprises, which are especially vulnerable. The European Union should focus on supporting these undertakings in the dramatic situation we are in now, just as it helps the EU air carriers by amending the relevant legislation. Instead, we are on track of adopting the first Mobility Package whose provisions, combined with the aftermath of the coronavirus outbreak will literally bring many European road transport businesses to an end.

The exact scale of this impact is now difficult to predict, but it could substantially undermine the ability of the European road transport to become a lever in overcoming a difficult economic situation that we will experience in the post-coronavirus period, due to the imposition of numerous restrictive measures.

The EU road transport sector in 2020 is an entirely different one than in 2019, let alone in 2015, when the conceptual work on the first Mobility Package had started. The impact assessments accompanying the proposals are consequently more than outdated. The solutions envisaged in the first Mobility Package need to be reshaped to be able to address the new economic reality.

We all agree that road transport is crucial for ensuring the uninterrupted supply of essential goods, including in particular medicines, medical equipment and food, both in the current situation and after the pandemic ends. However, this is not possible if drivers are forced to return to their home country and take a long rest there, or take their vehicle back to country of the Member State of establishment of the undertaking. The efficiency of transport operations will also be impaired by the restrictions imposed on cabotage operations and the limitation of additional loadings and unloadings.

During the legislative process related to the Mobility Package I, we have repeatedly been pointing out that the ban to take regular weekly rest periods in vehicle's cabin should not be imposed, without addressing the shortage of proper infrastructure in the EU. The waiver of this ban would contribute to drivers' social distancing which is one of the essential measures undertaken to combat the spread of the COVID-19.

In this context, we believe that the adoption of the first Mobility Package in its current form is neither reasonable nor justified. The economic landscape of the EU when the coronavirus crisis is over will be surely a completely different one. We cannot predict how long we will have to face additional measures like the health-checks. The road transport sector needs new solutions addressing a new reality. Therefore, we urgently call for a suspension of works on the first Mobility Package until the pandemic is over and reassessment of the situation of the road transport sector could be done with regard to the possibility of implementing its provisions.

We believe that road transport undertakings and employees deserve and need to be as competitive as possible after the pandemic is over.

Yours sincerely,



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Minister of Transport, Information Technology and Communications of the Republic of Bulgaria



Yiannis Karousos
Minister of Transport, Communications and Works, Cyprus



László Mosóczy
Minister of State for Transport, Hungary



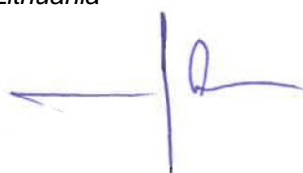
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Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communications, Romania

**Cc: EU Transport Commissioner
EU Transport Ministers**