

To:

Ursula von der Leyen – President of the European Commission

Adina Vaelean – EU Commissioner for Transport

Thierry Breton – EU Commissioner for Internal Market

Transport ministers: Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic

Cc:

Umberto de Pretto – IRU Secretary General

JOINT STATEMENT

All signed participants of this Joint Statement represent the biggest professional organizations in field of road transport in particular countries and are members of the International Road Transport Union. Collectively, we represent more than 8000 companies with more than 150.000 employees, but we reasonably feel confident speaking also on behalf of entire commercial road transport sector within our countries. Countries which are neighbouring and are the most affected by the current situation.

To start with, we would like to express we stand with the people of Ukraine and we strongly condemn unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine by Russia. We are fully aware of difficult situation of Ukrainian citizens and companies, and we support all humanitarian and other reasonable support the European Union is providing to Ukraine. Many bus operators of ours were involved in helping Ukrainian refugees fleeing to Europe and a lot of truck operators were carrying humanitarian deliveries since the very first day of the conflict.

Nevertheless, we collectively as the EU community shall also remain responsible towards the EU internal market, including transport industry. Practical implementation of the EU-Ukraine agreement on the carriage of freight by road went far beyond its original intentions and is currently causing serious damage to the EU market and harming competitiveness of EU road transport operators. Suspension of bilateral permits management has caused massive increase of transports within the EU operated by non-EU hauliers.

Fair competition is without any doubts beneficial, but only since rules are equal for all players in the field and there is compliance enforcement in place. Bilateral agreements of the single EU countries with Ukraine, which set quantity of bilateral permits, has been designed to maintain reasonable volume of transports that could be operated by Ukrainian operators without harming the EU market and shall have been lifted only once rules and conditions for Ukrainian operators are harmonized with the EU rules at all. As this happened prematurely, consequences emerged. Moreover, by suspending only part of the system, situation became very complex and difficult to control and enforce. Beyond the massive increase in volumes of bilateral operations, we see also increase of illegal operations by 3rd parties within the EU.

Regrettably, many of us have predicted such evolution, but our voice has not been heard, repeatedly. This lack of communication has led to escalations, as we currently see e.g. on the PL-Ukraine border.

Clearly this is not our original intention, just sign of frustration and need for re-opening dialogue immediately.

Hereby we ask and urge all decision makers involved to consider termination or significant changes to the current EU-Ukraine arrangement without any delay and thus enable a return to implementation of bilateral agreements of the single EU countries with Ukraine. We are ready to discuss any reasonable adjustment of the quota management system if it is done shortly. But we are not ready to sustain today's situation until 6/2024 as the current arrangement stipulates.

We remain at your disposal for any consultations necessary.

On November 17th 2023

Sincerely,



Zsolt Barna
president



Jan Buczek
president



Josef Melzer
president



Pavol Piešťanský
president



Romas Austinskas
president

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