



AG/GE7013/UDP

Geneva, 7 May 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE #7 FOR IRU MEMBERS

I hope you, your family and colleagues are well. In many parts of the world, we are beginning to exit the strict confinement measures that have upended our industry, and the operations of many of your organisations and member companies.

As emergency measures are relaxed, the priority for IRU remains monitoring the situation on the ground around the world as rules and processes change continuously, and pushing authorities for a well-coordinated, pragmatic and steady return to normal road transport operations, even if that is going to take many more months yet, and perhaps continue well into 2021.

And of course our intense advocacy efforts continue on the business impact the crisis has had on our industry, and on pushing governments to make financial and operational support plans that work for road transport.

Financial survival is still the biggest issue for many of your members and it will remain our priority too on a global level. We are here to support you as best we can through the coming months.

Although our COVID-19 related activity remains high, I do want to make it easier for you to receive and digest these updates so that they are useful for you and your colleagues. We may therefore reduce their frequency to bi-weekly or monthly in the future, depending on the volume of updates. Please let me know if you have any particular thoughts on this.

In the meantime, here is a short overview of IRU activities related to COVID-19 over the past week, since my last update to you on 30 April.

ADVOCACY:

Global

Our [new call to action](#) last week demanding wide-ranging support for the road transport industry, accompanied by my [new video](#), was received positively following [new letters](#) that I wrote to more than 20 international organisations.

I encourage you to use these messages with your own national authorities in the coming weeks and let us know what happens.

UNECE asked us to join its Virtual Multidisciplinary Advisory Group on transport policy responses to COVID-19. The first meeting will take place early June. The group aims to recommend policy changes to member states and covers all modes of transport.

Following my engagement with the ILO and our message to G20 employment ministers, the ILO is now working on a sectoral brief on road transport, with our support and information. This should be published next week.

UN-ESCAP has referenced IRU COVID-19 information and messages in a [new policy document](#) for its member states across Asia and the Pacific.

EU

EU transport ministers, at their [meeting last week](#), asked the European Commission to produce specific deconfinement plans for transport and tourism. This will be published on 13 May. We learnt that early drafts of this plan include only passenger transport, and not freight, as they consider freight issues to have been addressed elsewhere. Plans should include, for example, the lifting of traffic bans, driving and rest time rules, and extending the validity of certificates and control documents.

In the meantime, we are monitoring deconfinement measures as they are rolled out in many EU countries this week and next week. Unfortunately EU member states have not yet approved the EU's joint approach on lifting confinement measures, and we risk returning to the unilateral and uncoordinated decisions we saw when confinement measures were first introduced.

The EU transport ministers also discussed other issues raised by IRU prior to the meeting. The ministers recognised the importance of including transport in the EU multi-annual financial framework and upcoming EU Recovery Fund to ensure liquidity and investment needs for sector.

They also committed to continue the implementation of green lanes during the de-confinement period. And they welcomed the Commission's proposals to fast track legal changes to prolong the validity of expired control documents such as driving licenses.

The [Galileo green lanes app](#) was launched, monitoring 187 border crossings in Europe. Thanks to all members who helped test it.

Passenger

At last week's meeting of EU transport ministers, several ministers supported the idea of vouchers instead of cash reimbursements for cancelled tickets, possibly ensuring a mechanism of guarantee in case of insolvency, and their application to all types of transport including road. No decision was taken on this but discussions will continue and we expect a compromise proposal from the Commission soon.

We sent a draft position paper on social distancing to CTP-EU members with a deadline of Friday this week for input. Once approved, the paper will be circulated to all members worldwide, and we will use this to lobby European institutions, EU member states as well as other governments and authorities elsewhere.

In terms of cross-border passenger transport, and specifically the repatriation of citizens and movements of essential workers, we are lobbying governments to ensure that all modes are treated on a non-discriminatory basis and reverse the situation where air is favored over road.

Americas

The head of Mexico's National Guard responded to our concern, as expressed to the President of Mexico, on improving security on the country's highways.

Following on from our global open letter on the survival of passenger transport, we supported a coordinated effort with passenger groups in South America, in particular Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, in sharing information and strategies for advocating for a strong financial support plan.

We again participated in a regional coordination call with the World Customs Organization (WCO) private sector group to discuss green lanes in the Americas, AEO (authorised economic operator) programmes and digitalisation efforts to enhance safety by reducing human to human interaction at border crossings.

The driver safety checklists have been well received and are being used by members and international organisations through the Americas.

CIS

We wrote to the Chairman of the Eurasian Economic Commission regarding our recent [Call to Action](#), as also outlined in my letter earlier this week to [UN Secretary General Guterres](#).

Stressing the need to reduce the direct financial burden on road transport operators, while at the same time providing real business incentives towards a greener and more digital logistics and mobility sector, we are calling on governments of the Eurasian Economic Union to take action.

WEBINARS:

As I mentioned last week, we're launching a series of free webinars from today on topics related to COVID-19 and ensuring safety and efficiency in road transport.

They're open for all IRU members and take place from 11:00 to 12:00 (CET). Click on the links below to register.

[7 May – After the Pandemic: Preventing Cargo Theft](#)

[14 May – Cargo Loading & Securing for safe and efficient transport](#)

[19 May – Evidence based performance management in road transport](#)

TIR:

We wrote to UNECE on various problems encountered by transport operators, in particular on the expiry of certificate of vehicle approval, and the physical distribution of TIR carnets.

Supporting these proposals, UNECE then wrote to all TIR Contracting Parties encouraging them to be flexible on vehicle certificate expiry and to accept the print@home version of the TIR carnet. UNECE also sent the new [IRU-UNECE TIR flyer](#) with this letter.

We encourage all TIR association members to work with your customs authorities in order to use this opportunity, which can also allow us to quickly proceed to print@home solution on various corridors and make faster progress towards eTIR.

FLASH INFO:

Thanks again to all members for your [Flash Info](#) updates. We've received over 300 individual updates from members since 1 March, and over 50,000 people have used Flash Info since that time. Please continue sending updates to information@iru.org.

MEDIA:

Total media mentions are now approaching 1,000 articles, with a combined global reach of 1.13 billion people. You can find a cumulative collection of the top articles here: [COVID-19: IRU in the news](#). If you have any media questions, please let us know at press@iru.org.

Here is a recent selection of media coverage:

[Euractiv - Belgium](#)

[Diario de transporte - Spain](#)

[Shekulli - Albania](#)

[Verkehrsrundschau - Germany](#)

[Development Aid - Cyprus](#)

[Business AM - Belgium](#)

[Transporte - Mexico](#)

[The Parliament Magazine - Belgium](#)

[Intelligent Transport - UK](#)

[International Transport Journal - Switzerland](#)

For all of IRU's own news, we have implemented a notification system which will let you know via email when we have published a webnews. We will update this to enable you to choose your own news preferences and notifications in the second half of 2020.

SECRETARIAT:

As confinement restrictions are slowly phased out in Switzerland, our Geneva office will phase in normal operations from 11 May, with social distancing and sanitary measures in place, and some rotation of staff in the initial weeks as per government regulations. Our Beijing office is open, while other offices continue to work from home.

IN CLOSING:

Please keep your comments, questions and suggestions coming in, and as always, stay safe and healthy.

Yours sincerely,



Umberto de Pretto
Secretary General

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