

**Director General**

Adina-Ionan Vălean  
Commissioner for Transport

Thierry Breton  
Commissioner for the Internal Market

European Commission  
200, rue de la Loi  
1049 Brussels

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Dear Commissioner Vălean  
Dear Commissioner Breton,

We thank you for your leadership and the actions taken to keep our logistics running through the coordination and implementation of the EU guidelines on green lanes and on the movement of workers. More than ever, a united Europe is needed to protect citizens and industry, and to overcome the massive challenges in these turbulent times.

Although we still face operational issues to secure a reliable delivery of essential goods, it is time to think ahead with ambition, and to plan for the recovery out of this COVID-19 crisis. Cefic welcomes the “Joint European roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures”, presented by the European Commission and the European Council. But recovery will not be at the same speed in every member state, bringing additional complexity on supply chains.

With this letter, I’m offering you the practical recommendations our experts have collected and we believe are needed to manage the impact of the lifting of COVID-19 containment measures on European freight transport.

Yours sincerely,



Marco Mensink

Copy:

Karima Delli, Chair of the TRAN committee  
Henrik Hololei, Director-General DG MOVE

Annex: Cefic recommendations for a successful COVID19 recovery strategy for European freight transport

# Cefic recommendations for a successful COVID19 recovery strategy for European freight transport

## Introduction

Cefic thanks the EU Institutions for their proactive coordination at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, particularly for the practical guidelines developed to ensure continuation of smooth freight transport of essential goods throughout Europe. The implementation of green truck lanes significantly reduced extreme waiting times at inner-EU borders. The day-to-day follow up, in close communication with business associations, shows our joint ability to overcome this difficult situation.

Cefic also highly welcomes the “Joint European roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures” of the European Commission and the European Council.

With increasing economic activity, the increase in transport of goods and free movement of workers has to be planned for, not only across EU member states, but also between EU and non-EU regions.

Cefic would like to highlight a number of recommendations for a successful freight transport recovery plan, to ensure free movement of goods to maintain vital chemical industry based supply chains for multiple key industries..

## Key recommendations

### PROTECTION OF DRIVERS AND LOGISTICS WORKERS

To protect an increasing number of freight transport workers, including staff at transshipment points, intermodal freight terminals as well as loading and unloading points, we ask the EU and national authorities to take the following measures:

1. Reopen and provide sufficient parking and resting facilities along the main transport routes. This will avoid crowded parking areas and facilitate drivers taking their rest periods and also provide for safe overnight parking of vehicles.
2. Ensure access to food and sanitary facilities, including access to personal protective material and equipment (face masks, gloves, disinfectant, etc.) in these resting areas. This will ensure that drivers are well equipped and protected when they arrive at transshipment and (un)loading points, as well as border control stations.

## **INCREASE CAPACITY FOR FREIGHT TRANSPORT**

Today, many border crossings and parking locations remain closed for freight transport. This measure was implemented by many member states to focus freight traffic control to limited locations and lanes. While much improvement has been achieved compared to the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, we still see congestion and significant waiting times at border crossings caused by country specific operational procedures and often inadequate infrastructure and/or capacities for border control measures. This situation will worsen with increasing transport demand, Cefic therefore recommends that the following actions be taken:

### **1. Reopen more border crossing points and transport lanes.**

The capacity and reliability of a supply chain is determined by its weakest link.

In a recovery phase, reopening of transport capacity will differ from country to country. It is therefore essential that sufficient transport infrastructure capacity is available across the end-to-end network. The aim should be to maintain border crossing delays at less than an average of 20 minutes. If certain EU Member States only maintain a limited number of border crossings, these will likely become bottlenecks, resulting in loss of valuable transport capacities, late deliveries as well as potentially health risks for drivers.

### **2. Increase capacity at border crossings**

Provide sufficient entry lanes at border crossing points, with sufficient staffing, and dedicated truck lanes, to avoid mixing different checking requirements and procedures (e.g. private cars vs. freight transport).

Fast opening of additional lanes or alternative border crossing routes, based on real time traffic information and as already suggested in the EU guidelines on green lanes.

### **3. Secure freight transport capacity with non-EU countries**

Chemical supply chains are inherently international, and reliable global connections through ports and inland transport infrastructure are as important as intra-EU connections.

There is a need to secure the proper functioning of border crossings with non-EU countries (e.g. Turkey, Russia,...), by extending the concept of green lanes to these countries.

### **4. Maintain the rights for cabotage operations**

Measures that reduce availability and capacity of freight transport cannot be accepted. Cefic therefore strongly opposes any measures that reduce or cease the possibility of cabotage operations.

## **HARMONIZATION and DIGITALISATION**

Particularly in times where the recovery process will vary by country, it is tempting for every member state to develop country specific administrative and checking procedures, to gradually open access to the market. This is how supply chain disruptions occurred at the start of the COVID-19 crisis.

1. Cefic asks for EU coordination and harmonized procedures, taking into account that Member States are at a different recovery level. Alignment and impact assessment of proposed measures is crucial for a successful freight transport recovery plan.
2. Cefic asks for a single harmonized document format, which builds further on the format proposed in Annex 3 of the EU guidelines on green lanes, and that includes all information member states need as part of the recovery plan (e.g. entry/exit destination,...).
3. Cefic understands the challenges that come with the implementation of digital solutions. However, we urge the European Commission and Member States to speed up the process, and allow transport information in a digital format, in English, and in all member states.
4. The results of checks in one Member State (health checks, document checks, etc.) should be registered and accepted in other Member States, to avoid additional stops, congestions and minimise people contact.
5. Cefic suggests to create an EU mobile app, that allows for contactless reading and writing of this harmonized COVID-19 related information (e.g. using QR codes), and that allows to reuse information across member states
6. Cefic welcomes the multilateral agreements that have been signed by many member states to extend the validity period of driver licenses and equipment certificates for the transport of dangerous goods (ADR, RID, ADN). We ask for similar agreements at IMO level, to avoid global supply chain disruptions due to equipment unavailability.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF RAIL FREIGHT**

During this COVID-19 crisis, rail freight transport has proven to be an essential mode of transport, , with substantially less people-to-people contact. Intermodal transport in particular is a safe and efficient mass alternative to long distance trucking.

The freight transport recovery plan should therefore maintain all support measures put in place to ease international rail freight, such as simplification of border crossing procedures or financial support to foster the shift to intermodal rail transport.