



Warsaw, 1st of April 2020

Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Dear Madame President,

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to you desperately asking for your support and EU leadership with regards to the dramatic situation at the EU border with Turkey.

As you are aware on the 22nd of March Turkey has prohibited entrance on its territory of professional drivers providing transport services from many appointed countries, including most EU Member States. Polish drivers of trucks delivering goods from EU to Turkey are banned from entry. Vehicles were stopped, mainly near Kapikule border crossing point between Bulgaria and Turkey. Some of the drivers have been blocked at the border in terrible living conditions, what constitutes a serious threat to their health. This situation is unacceptable, especially in the face of COVID-19 pandemic. Bulgarian authorities have taken efforts in order to organise parking space for drivers and their trucks, however the problem is growing and Bulgarian capacities are limited.

We would also like to underline that such a step taken by Turkish authorities has a wide-ranging negative impact on EU businesses. Some of the road carriers blocked at the border have been instructed by senders of goods to move their loaded vehicles back to loading places. This means huge losses for these carriers, but also for consignees in the EU. As a result, we ended up with a situation where suddenly Turkey imposed barriers on trade of goods between EU and its territory, but on the EU side only.

What is more, Turkish drivers and hauliers are excluded from these restrictions. They continue to cross the EU-Turkey border without difficulties. Turkish authorities claim, that the flow of goods is still possible under the condition that drivers from "banned countries" are replaced by Turkish citizens or semitrailers are exchanged between hauliers. These solutions are however out of reach for most of EU companies. Moreover, Turkish carriers easily take advantage of this situation and take over cargo, which up till now has been transported by carriers from 'banned countries' including Poland.

Since 22nd of March we have taken various initiatives in order to solve the problem. We have called on the Polish government to take immediate actions as well as supported IRU, of which we are a Member, in their continuous efforts. However, none of the actions resulted in improvement of the situation.

Therefore, we are forced to call on the European Union to:

- **take immediate diplomatic measures** in order to support its Member States in resolving the problem on EU-Turkey border and **enable immediate entrance of EU drivers into Turkey;**
- if no result is achieved **take immediate retaliation measures towards Turkey and its drivers;**
- **support Bulgarian authorities in securing decent parking facilities** for drivers including access to sanitary infrastructure, food as well as safety equipment (detergents, gloves etc.).

We would like to thank the European Commission for all the initiatives taken so far in order to fight with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the situation at the EU-Turkey border is alarming and calls for urgent measures. Therefore, we count on your leadership and support in order to secure the free movement of goods.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Buczek

President of the Association of International
Road Transport Carriers in Poland

Sent in copy to:

Phil Hogan, Commissioner for Trade

Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Janez Lenarcic, Commissioner for Crisis Management

Adina Valean, Commissioner for Transport

Vera Jourova, Commissioner for Values and Transparency

Ylva Johansson, Commissioner for Home Affairs