

Ms. Yvla Johansson
European Commissioner for Home Affairs
Mr. Wopke Hoekstra
European Commissioner for Climate Action
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM



By email

BR1060790/RMA

Brussels, 11 septembre 2024

Re: Action needed to ensure the free movement of goods in the European Union in view of Germany's temporary reintroduction of border controls

Dear Commissioner Johansson,

Dear Commissioner Hoekstra,

IRU, the world road transport organisation, representing over 3.5 million goods and passenger road transport companies worldwide, including one million in the European Union (EU), is strongly concerned that Germany's announced reintroduction of border controls as of 16 September will materially hinder the flow of goods and intra-EU trade.

We are calling for your support to ensure that such negative impact is minimised by applying the type of measures established under the European Commission's transport Green Lanes issued during the COVID-19 pandemic, and most importantly:

- *Germany should separate goods transport from non-essential traffic and introduce priority lanes for heavy goods vehicles to reduce the loss of time due to the new controls to a minimum; and*
- *Encourage the check of trucks on a random basis and set an objective of maximum 15 minutes per truck unless there are prima facie signs of migrant presence on board.*

Context

On 10 September 2024, due to security risks related to irregular migration, Germany announced the temporary reintroduction of border controls at its land borders for a period of six months starting from 16 September 2024.

In principle, Germany already has temporary controls at some of its land borders with Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, France and Switzerland, but in practice, checks have been seldom performed. When they did happen, mainly during the European Football Championship, although performed on a random basis, they caused waiting times of up to 3 hours. More systematic checks have been reported at the German/Polish border point on A2, with similar waiting times.

The newly announced measures also concern the borders with Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Denmark. We have received signals that border checks may become more significant.

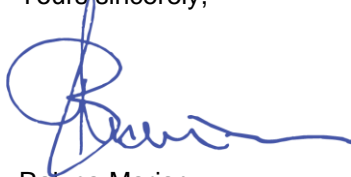
To understand the consequences of rigorous border checks on all vehicles, we would like to recall the experience we had during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time, queues of up to 40km long and hours of delay had become a daily experience, which almost halted cross-border trade and triggered the European Commission to issue the Green Lane approach for commercial freight.

Priority lanes at border crossing points have proven to be effective in ensuring the free movement of goods

The introduction of Green Lanes for heavy goods vehicles during the COVID-19 pandemic had proven to be very successful in guaranteeing free movement and in reducing waiting times at selected border crossing points. Therefore, IRU calls on your support to call on Germany and other Member States to provide the necessary guarantees for the free movement of goods by road when temporary border controls are reintroduced.

We trust that we can count on your support to encourage measures that keep road goods transport and EU trade flowing within the EU.

Yours sincerely,



Raluca Marian

Director EU Advocacy and General Delegate, IRU Permanent Delegation to the EU