1. The first informal Video-Meeting of the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region was held on 10 June 2020 upon the initiative of the BSEC PERMIS.

2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Mircea LAZAR, Minister Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Representative of the Romanian Chairmanship-in-Office, who welcomed the increased participation in the meeting of experts from the respective transport and customs authorities. He also invited the BSEC Member States to present their candidacies for the vacant posts of the Country Coordinators of the Working Groups on Transport and on Customs Matters.

3. In his opening remarks the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES invited participants to arrive at concrete recommendations and tangible results that could facilitate road transportation among the BSEC Member States and beyond, as well as help alleviate the serious problems provoked by the coronavirus pandemic.

4. The working sessions of the Meeting were moderated by Mr. Sergii KRAVCHENKO, BSEC PERMIS Project Coordinator.

5. The Video-Meeting of the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region was attended by the representatives from the following BSEC Member States:

   Republic of Armenia
   Republic of Azerbaijan
   Republic of Bulgaria
   Georgia
   Republic of Moldova
   Romania
   Russian Federation
   Republic of Serbia
   Republic of Turkey
   Ukraine

6. The representatives of the Union of Road Transport Associations in the BSEC Region (BSEC-URTA) attended the Meeting as Sectoral Dialogue Partners.
7. The representative of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) attended the Meeting as a Guest.

8. The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.

**DISCUSSION POINT I: CORONAVIRUS AND ITS IMPACT ON SUPPLY CHAINS AND MOBILITY NETWORKS**

9. The Steering Committee took note of the presentation delivered by Mr. Matthias MAEDGE, IRU Director-Advocacy, concerning the grave impact of Covid-19 and the relevant restrictions on movement and social distancing, that heavily affected the commercial road-transport operators and users. He underlined that amidst the outbreak of the pandemic countries actually posed more restrictions, rather than facilitate the seamless transportation of goods. The IRU conducted a detailed analysis with regard to the impact of Covid-19 on passenger and goods operators. Among other, the IRU representative mentioned some key measures that could be implemented in order to improve the distressing situation in which the sector is today and, especially, support the bus / coach passenger industry which has suffered the most; some of the measures mentioned were: tax deferral for SMEs, credit facilities and creation of a dedicated European fund. The Presentation of Mr. MAEDGE is attached as **Annex II**.

10. In the statement delivered on behalf of Mrs. Asli CALIK, President of BSEC-URTA, the latter emphasized that after the Covid-19 pandemic all existing norms, strategies and models of the road-transport industry have to be reviewed and the entire process of the supply chain at a global level will have to be re-edited. She also stressed that now is the right time to work with the BSEC Member States for establishing PPP models that will drive the necessary recovery in regional economies; in doing so, road-transport operators, drivers, workers and transport users have to be kept safe and supply chains / mobility networks operational. The Statement of Mrs. CALIK is attached as **Annex III**.

11. Mr. Hasan BOZ, Head of Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Turkey informed participants about the negative consequences of Covid-19 on the road-transport sector in Turkey, providing concrete figures of the pandemic’s economic impact and informing on restrictions and procedures of border-crossing by drivers, engaged in international transportation. He attached special significance to regional cooperation and to the digitalization in the transport sector, focusing on the outcome of the first Technical Meeting on the e-PERMIT Project, which took place in Ankara in March 2020, at the initiative of the Republic of Turkey.

12. Mr. Atakan OZDEMIR, Head of Department of the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Turkey informed participants on the latest status and measures put into force concerning international transport operations across the country, referring also to the measures introduced by the Ministry of Health of Turkey in order to overcome the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, while the Turkish Customs Offices meticulously followed the instructions issued. It was further clarified that all bilateral and transit movements are open in / through Turkey and that an economic stimulus package introduced by the Turkish Government reached almost USD 40 billion. The Statement of Mr. OZDEMIR is attached as **Annex IV**.

13. The delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan informed on the process of implementing a range of emergency measures in Azerbaijan, in order to respond to the global coronavirus pandemic and its adverse consequences, focusing on the implementation of the Action Plan and relevant decisions of the Azerbaijani Operational Headquarters under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic. The Statement is attached as **Annex V**.
14. The Ukrainian delegation, represented by experts from the Ministry of Infrastructure, informed on the measures implemented in order to prevent the expansion of Covid-19, noting that the Ukrainian Government did not impose any restrictions on international freight transportation; foreign drivers of freight vehicles, in accordance with the decision of the Government of Ukraine, are able to enter the territory of Ukraine or transit through Ukraine without obstacles. Only the borders to Russia and Byelorussia remain closed for the moment.

15. At the end of the Session, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, summing-up some of the highlights from the interesting interventions, referred to the initial impulsive reaction of countries to close their borders, until they understood that regional and international cooperation was an indispensable prerequisite in mitigating the negative effects of the pandemic. He also repeated a sentence by one of the speakers that, in the so-called “new normality”, regional trade & exchanges will develop faster and further and underlined that this actually means that regional Organizations promoting the overall economic cooperation among their members, will play an even greater role in the near future. The BSEC Organization will thus become even more important in actively promoting cooperation and understanding in the wider Black Sea region.

**DISCUSSION POINT II: ROAD TRANSPORT INDUSTRY’S «DRIVING THE RECOVERY» PLAN**

16. Mr. Matthias MAEDGE, IRU Director, presented some of the financial and non-financial recommendations (Annex VI) prepared by IRU in order to support road-transport, urging Governments in the region to concentrate and focus on the road-transport sector, however much the role of railways has increased. Following are some of the proposed measures:

- Financial grants and new loans to road-transport operating companies;
- Refinance existing credits, especially vehicle loans, for fleet renewal, at low or 0% interest rates;
- Extend payment deadlines and/or temporarily reduce or waive taxes, road-user charges and duties including corporate taxes, social contributions and fuel tax;
- Reduce insurance premiums and waive premiums for non-operational vehicles;
- Set-up financial support programmes for temporarily unemployed road transport workers;
- Establish green lanes for trucks to be implemented at all border crossing points, backed by policies and procedures that prevent additional and systematic halting of trucks at all borders;
- Prioritise collective passenger transport, particularly for workers, with appropriate health protective measures put in place;
- Designate road-transport workers as key workers, giving them priority access to proper protection and disinfection equipment and materials;
- Allow for maximum flexibility on the interpretation of driving rules, driving restrictions and tolerance measures to prolong the validity of expired control documents including visas, certificates, and licences.

17. The Steering Committee took also note of the presentation provided by Mr. Adrian ALBU, BSEC-URTA Secretary General, who put forward concrete proposals for the next 6 months in order to facilitate the implementation of the objectives of the (MOU) Memorandum of Understanding on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region. The Presentation of Mr. ALBU is attached as Annex VII.
18. The delegation of Romania expressed support for the BSEC-URTA proposals; it was suggested to focus on some of them, in order to achieve better results. The representative of the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure & Communications of Romania also expressed hope that the BSEC Organization focuses more on the real issues aggravating road-transport in the region, like: border-crossing delays, lack of digitalization (in particular, e-CMR), lack of information exchange, the need to further develop the BSEC permits pilot project and extend it to more Member States, etc.

19. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Transporters’ Association of Turkey (UND) Mr. Alper OZEL welcomed the outcome of the Study-Visit of representatives from Customs Authorities of BSEC Member States and of the BSEC-URTA Associations to the border crossing point Kapıkule – Kapitan Andreevo on the Turkish-Bulgarian border, which took place in May 2019; he underlined that more site visits would be helpful for identifying necessary actions for facilitating the road-transport of goods. He also touched upon issues related to border crossing, focusing on problems that expose drivers, trucks and their cargo to serious security risks (thefts, illegal immigrants etc.). The Presentation of Mr. OZEL is attached as Annex VIII.

20. The UND representative also raised the issue concerning possible financial involvement and support to the sector from the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), as a BSEC Related Body.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE VIDEO-MEETING

21. Participants had the opportunity to discuss issues on how to alleviate not only the difficulties created by the last pandemic, but also those existing for many years and seriously impede the fast and smooth road-transport of goods. They exchanged views and good practices and underlined the need for closer and better coordinated cooperation among all stakeholders in the black Sea region. Mr. MAEDGE from IRU stressed that his (global) Union of Road-Transport Associations is ready to assist the BSEC Organization (and, thus, its Member States and all interested parties) in becoming a role-model in what concerns the free and smooth land flow of people and goods.

22. Some of the most important conclusions drawn from the video-meeting can be summarized as follows:

- International transportation will play a significant role in the recovery of trade and of the economies of BSEC Member States.
- International and regional cooperation for diminishing the negative impacts of COVID-19 are essential. Facilitations in road transportation such as Visas for professional drivers, transit quotas, reduction of road-user charges etc. will help the recovery of the private sector.
- Digitalization in transportation has become even more important because of COVID-19 and projects such as e-permit, e-CRM and e-TIR are expected to be accelerated in the near future.

23. Considering the above, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General suggested that Member States should exchange views on how the BSEC Organization could initiate the right procedure for satisfying some of the requests put forward by the participants. He concretely proposed the following:
- The BSEC PERMIS will distribute to all Member States the presentations made by IRU and BSEC-URTA, in which most of the discussed suggestions and proposed measures are included.

- The BSEC PERMIS will prepare a short list of the most urgent and feasible requests / suggestions put forward, both, by IRU and BSEC/URTA and distribute this list to all Member States; at the same time, the PERMIS will propose possible ways for reaching consensus in finding concrete solutions, at least to some of the problems listed, which aggravate the unimpeded functioning of the road-transport sector in the region;

- The BSEC PERMIS will officially request all Member States to forward to the former the package of measures adopted by their respective Governments until today, concerning the negative impact of Covid-19 and the facilitation of transports, in order to upload them on its BSEC PERMIS Website for easy reference by any interested stakeholder. The data provided could be updated whenever necessary.

- Concerning the question about the possibility of the involvement/support of the BSTDB (see above item 20), the Secretary General promised to forward the question to the Bank and inform participants in due time on the latter’s answer. He added that, in his opinion, if there are any concrete, bankable project proposals, the “BSEC Bank” would certainly show interest to consider them, thus he encouraged the interested parties to start working on similar project proposals.

24. The participants welcomed the initiative of the BSEC PERMIS in organizing the informal Video-Meeting of the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region.

25. The Chairperson closed the Meeting with his concluding remarks.
VIDEO-MEETING
OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE ON FACILITATION
OF ROAD TRANSPORT OF GOODS IN THE BSEC REGION

10 June 2020

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COVID-19 and the road transport industry

Session I
Matthias Maedge
IRU Advocacy Director

The world's road transport organisation
IRU is the global voice of companies providing commercial road transport, mobility and logistics services.

- 160+ members
- 80+ countries
- 60% logistics
- 40% mobility
COVID-19 and corresponding restrictions on movement and social distancing has had an enormous impact on commercial road transport operators and those they serve.
COVID-19

Impact on road transport: Passenger operators (Europe)

Expected 57% decline in annual turnover in 2020 due to travel restrictions, with the highest impact in tourism. Bulgaria, Spain and the UK are the most impacted countries.

Significant impacts due to:
• Market shut-down for long-distance coach travel and school transport
• Total loss of revenue, need for liquidity to meet with loan/lease obligations
• Mistrust in the use of public transport services related to social distancing
• Impacts from health and security measures imposed by COVID-19

Identified key additional measures could be implemented in order to improve the situation including: tax deferral for SME’s, credit facilities and creation of a dedicated European fund in order to support the passenger industry.

Impact on Road Passenger Transport
- 1% of nominal GDP
  - Road Passenger turnover
    - TURNOVER
  - Impact on FY 2020
    - -57% = -81B€
  - Impact on 2020 turnover by segment
    - B & C - URBAN/LOCAL
      - -41%
    - B & C - INTERCITY
      - -70%
    - B & C - TOURISM
      - -82%
    - TAXI
      - -50%

Impact on road transport: Goods operators (Global)

• Due to disruptions in global logistics, the estimated impact is -18% on turnover in FY 2020.
• The introduction of restrictive measures has slowed down transportation across the globe with disruptions in volume operations due to restrictions, health screening, border controls and closures.
• APAC and Middle East-North Africa are the most impacted regions with a 21% drop in turnover.

Impact on Road Freight Transport
- 3% of nominal GDP
  - Road Freight turnover
    - TURNOVER
  - Impact on FY 2020
    - -18% = -417B€

The top 3 facilitation measures that have been a success:
• Exemptions on rules governing driving and resting times
• Extension of driving licenses and certificates
• Facilitate the transport of goods where interrupted

The top 3 facilitation measures that have not been considered successful:
• Restrictions at border crossings
• Mandatory truck convoys
• Truck driver quarantine routine.

Impact by region on road freight
- Turnover impact in FY 2020
  - Europe
    - -17%
    - -18%
  - EURASIA
    - -12%
    - -22%
  - APAC
    - -19%
    - -29B€
  - ME & NORTH AFRICA
    - -25%
    - -30B€
Impact on Road Freight Transport

Due to disruptions in global logistics, the estimated impact is -22% on turnover in FY 2020.

Depending on the country, few border crossings are open for truck movements, leading to a significant impact on trucking volumes.

Transport operators are facing short-term operational issues such as long waiting times at borders, quarantine, health checks at borders, lack of liquidity and income.

Identified key additional measures could be implemented to improve the situation: regional trade facilitation collaboration, liquidity support, cessation of truck convoys, reduction of road tax and tolls.

The top 3 facilitation measures that have been a success:
- Exemptions on rules governing driving and resting times
- Extension of driving licenses and certificates
- Facilitate the transport of goods where interrupted

The top 3 facilitation measures that have not been considered successful:
- Restrictions at border crossings
- Mandatory truck convoys
- Insufficiently active implementation of the "green lane" practice for essential goods and food.

1. Excl. Albania, Armenia, Serbia (no data available)
Statement by Mrs. Aslı Çalık, BSEC-URTA President

Excellences,
Distinguish Ladies & Gentlemen,

Thank you for being invited and Welcome to everybody to this first ever web meeting of the BSEC Steering Committee for Facilitation of Road Transport.

First of all, this scale of outspreading "Pandemic" was unknown and was not in the worst case scenario of any country in the world, none of the economies were prepared for it.

Now, all the principles of the road transport industry, future strategies and approaches must be reviewed and the entire process of the supply chain at a global level will be re-edited and newly developing policies will be vital for restructuring.

The Covid-19 Pandemic was the only catastrophic experience such a degree of economic damage at the global level after World War II.

We can bring a new definition like before and after Pandemic at the global level. Country administrations create a strategic road map by evaluating the situation experienced on a global scale in many sectors. In this unexpected crisis environment; countries should be put into practice by taking the most accurate and sustainable decisions quickly and calmly and cautiously.

Nowadays, in the management of supply chains, demand and supply planning approaches based on traditional time series is subject to sharp changes in market due to commercial dynamics, pandemics, natural disasters, etc. It is obvious that due to these factors, it is not enough to meet the current business needs only. In the near future, there will be a need for supply chains that have a flexible business model that is not affected by monetary changes and those can make sustainable dynamic moves and decisions will win the game.

For all these reasons, the known ways of doing business will be replaced by new business models. Dependency to one country by means of production area like the United States of America where main production area is China, will change and countries’ approach to choose supplier countries will be diversified and according to our expectation more regional trade will develop. The regional cooperation platforms like BSEC will gain more power and regional trade will boost. This change will start from the production areas. In some critical sectors, countries will establish production areas within their sovereign boundaries or close hinterlands, which will change the itinerary of freight mobility in the world.
We think the transportation industry will go beyond the traditional routes as countries will need to use their existing stocks effectively and manage their supply chains by keeping the risks arising from the current cyclical situation at the optimum level. All of this will be a transition process and preparation will be made for another phase with the change of known technologies in road transport. Here, the driver, the human factor, will become disadvantaged and we will come across autonomous and contactless transport vehicles. We think it will bring a new age of transportation with industry 5.0, society-oriented unmanned technologies and vehicles with artificial intelligence outputs.

As of today, globally, the Fuel / Natural Gas, Transportation (airline), Tourism, Insurance, Finance, Automotive / Spare Parts, Electronics and Retail sectors decreased by approximately 47%, while Logistics and Trade transactions decreased by approximately 25%. At BSEC countries level no major impact in the field of import and export operations to/from Turkey in average but transit operations through Turkish territory were highly impacted.

- *What new approaches can we see about obstacles and restrictions?*

In the process of pandemic measures, countries have implemented more protective measures. The process is the first example where the combatting is national and the problem is global. Main concern here is that the measures taken by the countries in this period not to turn into counter-practices in the post-pandemic process.

International road transport industry was in a very challenging environment in the pre-Covid period and fundamental encountered problems were shortage of quotas, transport mode imposition, barriers in front of transit, complicate structure of issuance of driver visa they and other non-tariff barriers. Post Covid period is expected to bring additional health report accreditation systems to the drivers.

Mobility of people/drivers will be based on proven medical report in the border crossings and transit areas, this will mean additional time and cost for our industry.

Since the pandemic is human-oriented, we predict that governments will invest more in unmanned / contactless business models in the future and infrastructure investments will be in the field of more integrated multimodal transport systems.

Since the Threats and Opportunities will be on our agenda at the same time, the road transport industry in BSEC region needs to set a new future strategy in order to adopt ourselves to the changes. Understanding the new normal, redesigning and ensuring successful reform should be our next agenda. Of course, we have an approach based on public-private consultation actions with long-term policy.

BSEC-URTA together with the IRU disseminate real time information about the Border Crossings Status due to COVID-19, seek the leadership and guidance of UNECE, EU Commission, BSEC, WHO, ILO, EBRD etc. besides informative guidelines and very practical tools have been created for transport operators and the drivers including easy reach to the Finance through EU Funds.

Now it's the momentum to work with BSEC member states with PPP model to drive recovery in the regional economies and communities by: keeping drivers, workers and transport users safe, keeping supply chains and mobility networks operational, keeping road transport operators in business.

Post Pandemic environment shows us that crisis will continue to disrupt the normal functioning of small and medium size businesses most. Although many countries are now beginning to ease “lockdown” measures, global economic conditions continue to weigh heavily on entrepreneurs.
Now governments focus on the implementation of recovery plans which IRU has already distributed for the SME’s and liquidity problem is the key one for our members.

**Development of new transport contracts and money flow from banks to transport companies are urgent necessities.**

Different lessons learned and unstable environment will provide us more feedback to reshape the future of industry. Dynamic involvement of governments is vital for the effective transition period. For the survival and sustainability of the freight transport companies within BSEC region, we should take further steps to liberalize the road transport market—first step could be the BSEC e-permit platform, efficient road- sea & rail networks with optimized time and cost must be envisaged. A regional and facilitated outlook should be brought to the visa procedures (e-visa procedure for professional road crew). BSEC regional initiative could be a show case for everything which will be vital for future in order to minimize the human factor, increase the level of social distancing to minimize human touch and spreading of such viruses which will be the core of our future actions.

BSEC-URTA kindly asks the full support of governments of BSEC member states to bring a new vision to regional development and digital improvement campaign with a feet touching ground road maps and action plans.

Last but not the least, we very much thank to H.E. Mr. Ambassador Michael Christides, representatives from BSEC PERMIS, IRU and Members States, our members for their support and dedication to make this meeting a success. Having this opportunity we would like to send very special thanks to our drivers who sacrifice their life in order to ensure the continuity of the supply chain.
Statement of Mr. Atakan ÖZDEMİR – Head of Department:

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Ministry of Trade, I would like to present you my sincere compliments for organizing such a meeting which will give us opportunity to monitor the current transport and customs situation across the Black Sea Region during the Covid-19 pandemic times.

As you are all well aware, Turkey is one of the first signatories of the worldwide customs conventions. And in that respect, we fully adhere to our international obligations. So, we attach our utmost effort for a seamless and rapid transport during those harsh times. We also implement electronic transport procedures such as e-TIR.

At the beginning of the pandemic term, Turkey constituted a mechanism led by Ministry of Health. Thus, all the public and business institutions were affected and instructed by that mechanism.

Besides, Ministry of Interior published Circulars to regulate the daily routine life. Of course, these Circulars were not just about the internal environment but also about the international transport carriages. As a matter of fact, these decisions restricted some international movements as a part of fighting against this dangerous pandemic.

But in any case, there were no food and medical stuff restrictions and supply-chain was smoothly-functioning. Just, lemons, masks and disinfection materials were put into special export permit.

Apart from those, as Ministry of Trade, we also took our own measures. But bearing in mind the importance of the international trade, we also implemented our own solutions to tackle the problems. For instance, we utterly took advantages of the multimodal and intermodal transport modes. By doing so, railway means reached their real potential and became a part of contactless trade.

Afterwards, with the upturn and things got better, the restrictions were lifted gradually.

For the time being, with the latest Circulars dated 8th May and 14th May, all the bilateral and transit movements are opened in/through Turkey.

And finally on 4th June, Gürbulak Border Gate with Iran and the Habur Border Gate with Iraq reopened in order to continue trade as coronavirus containment measures are eased.

Therefore, let me give you the broad perspective with regard to the international carriages across Turkey:
* Trucks and drivers transiting through Turkey and showing no symptoms of COVID-19 are allowed to enter country. The drivers should wear masks at all places they may be in contact with other people, such as rest stops. The drivers should also carry adequate masks, disinfectants and food supplies in their vehicles. And all vehicles are subjected to disinfection process.

A written commitment is taken at the border gates to assure transit drivers will not layover or await unnecessarily in Turkey. The vehicles will also be monitored via Vehicle Tracking Systems.

* On the other hand, all drivers who are destined to Turkey are subjected to health checks. And vehicles are also subjected to disinfection process.

*Within Ro-Ro transport, only trailer/container transport are carried out. Passenger and whole vehicle transport are not allowed. In some exceptional cases, drivers are also allowed to get on the vessels.

However, all drivers are allowed to board Ro-Ro vessels between Turkey-Ukraine (Zonguldak-Chornomorsk (Ilyichevsky), İstanbul (Haydarpaşa) - Chornomorsk (Ilyichevsky), Karasu - Chornomorsk (Ilyichevsky) and Turkey-Romania (Constanta – Karasu).

Last but not least, please let me give you some statistical data as regards the economic measures in Turkey. These figures are also related to ‘Driving the Recovery Plan’ raised by IRU.

From the very beginning of the pandemic period, Turkish Government evaluated all the means to overcome the negative impacts of the pandemic. With the economic support packages, the entire business sector were benefited. Up to now, almost 40 billion dollars is granted to the real and financial sector to boost the economic activities again. Transport sector was also one of our main priorities.

And of course, we are driving the way forward for new and sustainable contributions in that sense.

Esteemed Participants,

By finalizing my words, I would like to thank you all for your patience. And no doubt, as public sector, we are always ready to listen to your comprehensive solutions for the business and specifically transport sector at any time.
Statement by the Representative of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan
(10 June 2020)

First of all, we would like to thank The Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region for creating such an opportunity for us to share our best practices in order to act in a coordinated way to manage supply chain risks and disruptions. We believe that such a coordinated work would help us to minimize the overall impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on our economies and societies.

It becomes more and more obvious that the global outbreak of COVID-19 is posing great risks for global supply chain, with inconceivable and unpredictable consequences for trading community and for global markets in general. While recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all approach in managing COVID-19, we still believe that sharing our best practices would help to minimize the overall impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on our economies and societies.

From this respect, it is critical that customs administrations under these circumstances act in a coordinated and proactive manner to manage supply chain risks and disruptions.

From our side, we would like to inform you the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan has issued an Action Plan in order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. The authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan established an Operational Headquarters under the Cabinet of Ministers consisting of senior officials of the appropriate government authorities, which coordinates response of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the spread of the coronavirus worldwide and threat of the outbreak of the infection in the country.

In order to implement the above mentioned Action Plan and decisions of Operational Headquarters under the Cabinet of Ministers, Customs Administration has taken following measures:

As primary decisions:

- isolation and transfer to hospital of suspected passengers with symptoms like fever or cough for further testing and observation;
- isolation and transfer to hospital for further testing and observation of passengers visited countries listed in sufficient decision of Operational Headquarters under the Cabinet of Ministers for the last 28 days;
- entry passengers are required to fill in health declaration forms, providing all necessary information about their address, contact information and countries visited for last 28 days;
- persons returning from risk areas may not enter the office for 14 days after their return;
- continuous dissemination of leaflets with WHO recommendations regarding prevention of COVID-19 among passengers at all customs border crossing points;
- body temperature screening at planes, ships and buses;
- body temperature checks and health inquiry on departure at airports, seaports and ground points of entry;
We are in the process of adopting and implementing a range of emergency measures in order to respond to the world-shattering pandemic:

- during all of this period all customs border crossing points has set to work on an enhanced mode;
- fast and smooth movement of goods required for COVID-19 treatment has a special priority;
- decision to temporary close the state border between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Islamic Republic of Iran, Georgia and Russian Federation was made based on mutual agreement in order to ensure safety and protect health of citizens of both countries.
- Corridors and charter flights will be ensured during this period to allow citizens to return to their countries;
- goods that are imported from Islamic Republic of Iran or through their territory by trucks are transshipped to the Republic of Azerbaijani trucks at terminals, close to customs border crossing points;
- decision allowing transportation of trucks that comes from Islamic Republic of Iran through a dedicated transit corridor with police escort was initially adopted;
- staff has been trained by specialists from the Ministry of Health;
- the use of provided personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, coveralls and glasses is mandatory for staff;
- relevant hygiene measures such as hands washing and disinfection, disinfection of surfaces and public areas;
- disinfection of trucks and vehicles;
- Medical Service Department of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued Methodical Recommendations on sanitary and hygiene behavior of customs officers.
- Medical Service Department of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan established PCR laboratory for customs officials.
- employees who do not maintain essential services are put on standby duty;
- continuous data exchange between sufficient agencies;

We believe that, solidarity and close cooperation and communication, as well as support to each other will be of great importance for overcoming this pandemic so we are eager and willing to cooperate in this direction.
COVID-19 and the road transport industry

Session II
Matthias Maedge
IRU Advocacy Director

COVID-19

Well functioning commercial road transport services are fundamental to economic and social recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 in all countries. IRU’s recovery plan has three broad aims.

Drivers, transport workers and citizens are safe
The health and safety of our workers, clients and communities is the industry’s highest priority.

Supply chains & mobility networks run smoothly
Goods and people need to move as efficiently as possible, especially during confinement and deconfinement phases when transport rules change rapidly.

Road transport operators stay in business
Road transport operators, often small and medium sized firms, are struggling financially and need support so they can help drive recovery.
COVID-19
IRU recovery plan: Financial recommendations

- Financial grants and new loans to road transport operating companies
- Refinance existing credits, especially vehicle loans, and for fleet renewal, at low or 0% interest rates
- Extend payment deadlines and/or temporarily reduce or waive taxes, road user charges and duties including corporate taxes, social contributions and fuel tax
- Reduce insurance premiums and waive premiums for non-operational vehicles
- Set-up financial support programmes for temporarily unemployed road transport workers

COVID-19
IRU recovery plan: Non-financial recommendations

- Establish green lanes for trucks to be implemented at all borders, backed by policies and procedures that prevent additional and systematic stopping of trucks at all borders
- Prioritise collective passenger transport, particularly for workers, with appropriate health protective measures put in place
- Designate road transport workers as key workers, giving them priority access to proper protection and disinfection equipment and materials
- Allow for maximum flexibility on the interpretation of driving rules, driving restrictions and tolerance measures to prolong the validity of expired control documents including visas, certificates, and licences
Meeting of the BSEC Steering Committee for Facilitation of Road Transport

Web conference, 10 June 2020

Since its foundation in 2001 BSEC-URTA was granted by the BSEC Organization with the Status of Sectoral Dialogue Partner
The Union’s Mission is to work together with governments of BSEC Organization, to enable road transport deliver the goods in cost efficient manner, secure, smoothly and safely in an integrated BSEC Road transport market and beyond, by interconnecting business, markets and all stakeholders to the best interest of society.

To reach its Mission BSEC-URTA works in close cooperation with the BSEC and IRU Secretariats and attaches priority to implementation of key UN trade and road transport facilitation instruments as well as BSEC Road Transport Memoranda in the Region.

BSEC Transport Memoranda on:

- Coordinate Development of the Black Sea Rind Highway
- Motorways of the Sea
- Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods
THE BSEC MOU ON FACILITATION OF ROAD TRANSPORT

✓ Since **20 July 2006** is in force for all 12 BSEC Member States:

✓ Operative Articles:
   - Article 3) Progressive Liberalization of International Road Transport of Goods,
   - Article 4) Accession to International Agreements
   - Article 5) Charging policies
   - Article 6) Facilitation of Visa Procedures for Professional Drivers.

TIME-TABLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MoU-F

At the 12th meeting of the Steering Committee for Article 3 it was decided:

**Objective 1**
Gradually liberalize transit – 1.01.2020
Gradually liberalize bilateral – 1.01.2019

**Objective 2**
Develop a regional multilateral quota system – no deadline (BSEC Permit system)
1. 8 BSEC Member States are partners in the project: AL, AR, GE, MD, RO, SRB, TR, UA.

2. 4 BSEC Member States agreed to enlarge the usage of the permit on a voluntary basis to 3rd country transport: GE, MD, RO, UA.

3. Amount of BSEC Permits / Project Participant: 1000 (AR-800).

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**BSEC-URTA proposal for next 6 months:**

- Allow free bilateral road transport between BSEC Member States
- Allow free transit road transport between BSEC Member States
- Finalize ePermit Pilot Project (TR, MD, UA) and join it by all BSEC Member States in 2021.
Objective 3

- Support development of efficient and adequate RO-RO and RO-LA transport systems – no deadline

**BSEC-URTA proposal for next 6 months:**

- Design and start construction of safe and healthy parking places with proper facilities for drivers on main routes, train stations (RO-LA) and ports (RO-RO)
- Drop bans on driving and allow spending of weekly rests in safe, secure parking

Objective 4

Monitor border waiting times – no deadline

**BSEC-URTA proposal for next 6 months:**

- Facilitate border crossing through joint controls, one stop checks, green lanes, random physical checks based on risk assessment
- Fight illegal immigration; stop punishing companies / drivers for it
- Fight corruption and bribery under all aspects
- Apply good examples from the region (MD, TR,..)
- Establish a BSEC mechanism with participation of trade, customs and transport authorities for facilitation of transport at the BCPs.
Objective 5
Implement key UN transport conventions

BSEC-URTA proposal for next 6 months:
- Join eTIR and eCMR

---

TIR system is used by over 34,000 transport and logistic companies in its 76 Contracting Parties.
- It reduces cross-border transport time by up to 80%, and costs by up to 38%.
- The computerisation of the Convention’s procedures is set to unlock significant further efficiency gains.
- eTIR pilot projects: Iran and Turkey, Iran and Azerbaijan; under consideration eTIR intermodal project between Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine
- On 5 February 2020 Contracting Parties adopted provisions providing the legal basis for the paperless operation of the TIR Convention Annex 11 (eTIR)
eCMR

At present the following BSEC Member States acceded the Additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention for the carriage of goods, known as the e-CMR: Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Russia and Turkey.

Objective 7

- Rationalize and gradually harmonize charging policies

BSEC-URTA proposal for next 6 months:

- Simplify and reduce all financial and fiscal documents of transport companies
- Reduce fuel excises, fuel tax, road user charges and all taxes imposed on road transport companies
- Reduce social security taxes
- Reduce interest of existing credits
- Give incentives and stimulus for transport companies.
- Purchase of vehicles, tires and spare parts in long installment rates
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 9</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ Facilitate visa procedures for professional drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BSEC-URTA proposal for next 6 months:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Eliminate on reciprocal basis visas for Professional Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Extend validity of existing visas for Professional Drivers at least for 6 month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Accept electronic applications for visas and issue electronic visas with 1 year validity, multiple entry, low cost and without time stay restrictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Initiate a Pilot Project for Electronic EU Schengen visas for Professional Drivers national of BSEC Member States.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you!
Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region

İstanbul
10.06.2020

IMPORTANCE OF BORDER CROSSING FACILITATION

OFFICIAL VISIT TO KAPIKULE WAS AN EYE OPENING EVENT

FURTHER SITE VISITS WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR ACTIONS AIMED AT FACILITATION

PRIORITY SUGGESTIONS: BORDER CROSSING POINTS BETWEEN UKRAINE-POLAND, SERBIA-CROATIA, GEORGIA-RUSSIA
HUMAN TRAFFICKING, IMPORTANT PROBLEM FOR BSEC TRANSPORTERS

Border between Serbia (Batrovici)-Croatia (Bajakovo)
- Thousands of migrants stuck in Serbia, with more than 6,000 migrants living in government-operated camps (Organized Human Trafficking Groups)
- Constant truck queues at the border which enables immigrants to sneak into trucks easily…
- High penalties imposed on both drivers and transport companies …

SUGGESTIONS FOR BSEC REGION

UK represents best practice in Europe by CIVIL PENALTY ACCREDITATION SCHEME

- Guidance for hauliers on preventing clandestine entrants. In many languages it is explained 10 steps to an effective system for drivers to prevent illegal immigration.
SUGGESTIONS FOR BSEC REGION

MEANS TO AVOID INCIDENTS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

COMMON SOLUTION, FOR COMMON PROBLEM!

✓ Cooperation between the countries of the Western Balkan route
✓ Increased bilateral and multilateral contacts in the region
✓ Secured Truck Parking areas, especially in Serbain-Croatian border and on key transit routes (there is a secured truck parking area at Kapıkule border gate secured by camera systems)
✓ Find means to eliminate truck queues on the borders
✓ Speeding up the border crossing procedures (improvements at Kapıkule border gate avoid long truck queues and prevent clandestine entrants)
✓ - similar improvements at BSEC borders (eg; Ipsala-Kipi)
✓ Support use of infrangible, unbreakable seals
✓ Support use of advanced technology in trucks & semi-trailers

JOINT BORDER ACCREDITATION SYSTEM (UK benchmark)

PROFESSIONAL DRIVER VISA PROBLEMS

GOODS TRUCK DRIVER

ARE INSEPARABLE

VISA is a barrier for the “Carried Goods”
Occasionally, different Embassies or Consulates of the same country or different countries require different documents for the applications.

**EXAMPLE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>Greece</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invitation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMR (new transport operation)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMR (old transport operations)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROFESSIONAL DRIVER VISA PROBLEMS**

Same person, different evaluations for the visa!

UK Visa until 02/2020

Visa for only 2 months
➢ LIMITATIONS ON PERIOD OF STAY (90 DAYS IN A 180 DAY PERIOD) IN THE SCHENGEN AREA REPRESENTS A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR BSEC TRANSPORTERS AND THEIR DRIVERS.

➢ DRIVER VISAS MAY BE FURTHER FACILITATED THROUGH A COMMON CERTIFICATION (I.E. LANDMAN’S CERTIFICATE)

DIGITAL BSEC PERMIT

FOR EFFICIENT BSEC SUPPLY CHAINS, DIGITALISATION OF ROAD TRANSPORT DOCUMENTS IS A MUST …