



TIR EXECUTIVE BOARD (TIRExB)

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TIR Executive Board (TIRExB)

Forty-eighth session

Geneva, 27 and 28 October 2011

Agenda item 11

Issues raised by the Greek national association

Below, the secretariat reproduces, for consideration by the Board, a letter from the Hellenic Federation of International Road Transports (OFAE).

Ref. No.: A13/1286

Athens, 29/07/2011

To:

1. **European Commission**
 - **Commissioner**, Mr Siim Kallas
 - **Head of Unit Land Transport Policy**, Mr Szabolcs Schmidt
 - **Director General**, Mr Matthias Ruete
2. **UNECE**
 - Transport Division – WP.30**
 - **Director**, Ms Eva Molnar
 - **TIR Secretary and Economic Affairs Officer**,
Mr Konstantin Glukhenkiy
 - **TIR ExB**
President, Ms Eleni Metaxa
3. **Bulgaria: National Customs Agency,**
Central Customs Directorate
State Expert, Ms Elisaveta Takova
4. **Romania: National Customs Authority**
Deputy Director, Mr Octavian Relu Botea
5. **Ukraine: State Customs Service of Ukraine**
Deputy Head, Mr Victor Bondar
6. **The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**
Department of Information & Communication Technologies
Customs Administration
Assistant Director, Mr Zlatko Kochovski

Subject: Problems encountered by Greek International Transport Operators

Once again, we feel the need to raise some important issues affecting our industry, in the hope of obtaining possible solutions, given your effective intervention, in the immediate future. The most noted problems are described below.

1. After several complaints by colleagues, we wish to stress the problems encountered by our international transporters upon transit in Bulgaria.

Within the framework of thorough inspections, the relevant control authorities, particularly in the areas of Blagoevgrad, Sofia and Ruse, demand, in addition to the mandatory documents that must accompany the vehicle, the Vehicle Registration Book. It is well known that this Book is not necessary to be held on board, and therefore, drivers should not be penalized for non-demonstration of this.

This problem has taken wide dimensions, and has been raised by our Ministry of Transport in writing, to the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport (document with ref. no. F 438/26140/3014/6-6-2011), officially stating that this Book of Vehicle Ownership is not an accompanying document and thus, hauliers must not be penalized for non-possession of this. Our Ministry also requested for the controlling authorities to be informed that this is not a requirement, and for penalties not to be imposed. Despite all this, the problem continues to exist.

Fellow transporters who are active in Bulgaria, are exposed to very strict inspections from Bulgarian authorities, and face disproportionately heavy penalties for violations which are not characterized by a similar degree of severity (imposition of fines on instances like for eg, exceeding the speed limit only slightly, exceeding the driving time by a few minutes, few minute delay in the installation of a new tachograph without any alteration to its data, non entry of the full name on the tachograph card, only because there were not enough fields to allow this in this in the first place – for example, "Chatzikallinikidis Char." instead of "Harry Chatzikallinikidis" etc.). Severe sanctions (removal of truck plates and accompanying documents from the vehicle, heavy fines, etc.) are not only disproportionate to the violation but, also negatively affect the transport industry as a result of delays, and therefore largely contribute to heavy economic consequences. Due to these fines not being directly linked with any issued charges, our colleagues do not have the legal protection that is required, unable to appeal against decisions, and have no other choice than to accept a compromise with the competent control bodies in the form of a reduction of the penalty amount. All these reports are confirmed by several Greek transport operators, having been exposed to such unfair and unacceptable treatment, who at the same time threaten to go on strike if such problems are not resolved in the immediate future.

2. We also wish to direct your attention to another problem that fellow transporters have, in this case concerning the transport of vehicle lubricants upon transit in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The restriction of this transport item exists only in FYROM. In order to carry out such a transport, hauliers are required to be present at the customs border only on weekdays between 9 and 10am. If for any reason, the haulier is not present between this hour, he has to wait until the following day. If the transport happens to take place on a public holiday, then the delay exceeds two days. When the transit finally does take place, it is escorted from the border of entry until the border of exit. There is also a financial burden entailed. Each vehicle is charged a minimum rate of €250, depending on the number of vehicles passing through.

Such unjustified restrictions, understandably, add to the total cost of the transport being undertaken, in both monetary terms and time delays.

3. Problems are also encountered by our operators when passing through Ukraine. Specifically, when our vehicles travel to non-EU countries, they pass customs control, whereby the Certificate of approval Number of the vehicle is verified, (Field 9 on the TIR Carnet cover page). Whilst all countries accept this particular registration number, in Ukraine this does not seem to be the case. The Ukrainian authorities do not accept vehicles with sliding sheets (canvas), to load any goods in their country. The paradox is, that whilst these type of vehicles are allowed entry and transit through Ukraine, when loading cargo there, the authorities decline the transport, insisting that it does not fulfill the requirements of a vehicle undertaking a TIR transport, due to the fact that these do not have rear doors.

The universal call to solve this problem is confirmed by the need for uniform rules in international transport and equal treatment of similar situations, in the elimination of obstacles in the sector.

4. Regarding customs controls at borders, particularly in Hungary and Romania, several transporters report having to bear the cost of unloading and then loading their goods onto the vehicle for customs inspection (as much as €400 for such a procedure). This financial burden which needless to say, contributes to the total cost of the transport, need not be conducted unnecessarily (ie. only in cases of infringement or suspicious circumstances). This, in a way, penalizes the legitimate operators, in that the cost of unloading and loading his cargo, for custom inspection, especially when irregularities or violations are not apparent, should not be at his expense. Having to bear this cost is unfair to any law-abiding transporter.

We have given some details as to the issues that are of great concern to our hauliers. Given that they are the central link in the entire chain of the transport of goods as an industry, we kindly request for some urgent light to be shed on these matters. We trust that the highly qualified and experienced individuals in the positions of authority can duly promote the relevant actions to overcome such difficulties that we have described for transporters in general.

Yours sincerely,

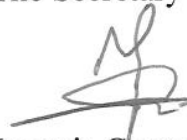
The President



Apostolos Kenanidis



The Secretary General



Ioannis Georgakas

Cc:

1. IRU

- **President**, Mr Janusz Lacny
- **Secretary General**, Mr Martin Marmy
- **Goods Transport Council, President**, Mr Pere Padrosa
- **Head of TIR Department**, Mr Marek Retelski

**2. European Commission, DG Mobility and Transport
Unit D.1 Land Transport Policy, Mr George Patris**

3. UNECE

**Transport Division - WP.30
Chief, Transport Facilitation and Economics Section,
Mr Michalis Adamantiadis**

4. Hellenic Members of the European Parliament

5. Romanian Members of the European Parliament

6. Bulgarian Members of the European Parliament

7. Hellenic Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport & Networks

- **Minister**, Mr Ioannis Ragkousis
- **Secretary General**, Mr Theocharis Tsiokas
- **General Director**, Mr Vasili Kallivoka
- **Director of Goods Transport**, Mr Triantafilos Papatriantafilou

8. Hellenic Ministry of Finance

- **Minister**, Mr Evangelos Venizelos
- **Deputy Minister**, Mr Pantelis Oikonomou
- **Secretary General**, Mr Ilias Plaskovitis

9. BSEC

Ambassador Secretary General, Mr L.T.Chrysanthopoulos

10. BSEC-URTA

- President, Mr Vladimir Florea

- Secretary General, Mr Haydar Ozkan