

Transport Community

Comments on the COVID-19 outbreak - road transport sector

27th April, 2020

The first weeks of the COVID-19 outbreak can be characterized as difficult and chaotic due to the different activities taken by national authorities, but later on coordinated activities have been taken that had a positive impact on the operations.

The main problems that road transport operators have faced are the following:

- Lack of prompt and comprehensive information regarding the measures that have been taken by national authorities and other information important for conduction of business. WB6 CIF and national chambers have been important communicating channel between national authorities and companies
- Expiration of validity of obligatory documents for drivers (licences, permission). Documents could not easily be extended (procedures locked, offices closed, etc). Procedures on national levels are more or less agreed, but for international documents still some open issues.
- Restrictions regarding maximum driving times need to be followed, which is hard due to the long queues and waiting times
- At the beginning of the crisis, hygienic conditions for drivers were not satisfactory (lack of protective equipment, fresh water, etc)

Current consequences of the COVID-19 that need prompt reactions:

- Big companies and SMEs differently reacted on the crisis. Big companies usually have some „exit strategies“ and risk management plans. Access to information for the SMEs is more limited.
- Big trading companies and retail chains have various operators whose services are used, logistics operators can easily be changed with others. Some big retail chains confirmed that they are more likely asking for the service providers from the region to ensure good services, network of smaller operators that are well informed and that can easily react to changes is desirable partner in these hard moments.
- Volume of goods has decreased, orders have been cancelled (automotive industry has big impact), number of trucks is much lower than before the crisis (for example number of trucks in Serbia on all BCPs in one day, entering Serbia is on the same level as it was entering Serbia only in Horgos few months ago, approx 400 trucks). Approximate calculations are that (comparing to the last year) volume of goods is 30% less and loss of logistics companies is around 40%. Transport companies are fighting to survive.
- Companies are facing financial, liquidity problems, harder to charge the financial claims due to overall crisis
- Lack of drivers due to the isolation and time losses

WB6 CIF reaction on the COVID-19:

- Regular, update information have been gathered from different sources and published on the www.wb6cif.eu web site, as well as on the web sites of chambers in the region

- WB6 CIF has approached to the European Commission in March in order to grant the access of WB6 CIF companies in green lines initiatives
- Gathering the information from the business sector in order to share it with relevant decision makers and insisting on prompt reactions
- Each WB6 CIF chamber is involved in decision making process regarding the measures that will be taken to support WB6 companies in overcoming the problems caused by COVID 19 outbreak
- Lack of accurate border crossings waiting time data still seems to be big constraint and therefore WB6 CIF will try to develop simple application in order to gather accurate data directly from companies using BCPs in the region