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EEF.DEL/10/22  
15 February 2022

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

**STATEMENT BY  
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ROAD TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL  
ROAD CARRIERS, AT THE FIRST PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE  
30th OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Vienna, 14 and 15 February 2022

**Promoting security and stability in the OSCE area through sustainable economic  
recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**

**Session III: Supporting sustainable economic recovery and growth through the promotion of  
transport and trade facilitation**

Mr. Moderator,

I represent a business association which brings together close to 1,500 Russian companies engaged in the carriage of goods and passengers in international road transport. The Association of International Road Carriers (ASMAP) is a member of the International Road Transport Union (IRU), whose headquarters are in Geneva.

In my statement I should like to dwell on two subthemes of our meeting.

**1. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on transport and trade**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a reduction in business activity, foreign trade and demand for transport services. In particular, it had a negative impact on the international road freight market.

In March 2020, most European countries introduced restrictive measures at their border checkpoints with a view to curbing the spread of the coronavirus disease – above all, health control measures. This caused significant transport delays and disruptions to the time frames for the delivery of goods.

In 2021, the situation began to stabilize, though the volume of goods transported internationally by road from Russia to the Member States of the European Union last year was nevertheless lower than in 2020.

Over the past two years, the following factors have especially hindered the normal functioning of the cross-border road transport sector:

1. The aforementioned additional checks at borders.

2. The heterogeneity of and insufficient co-ordination between the measures adopted in various countries. Carriers have to constantly keep track of changes to the legislation of the countries along the route on which goods are being transported so that their drivers are able in good time to get a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, register on a mobile app or fill in a questionnaire on the website of the control authorities.
3. The non-recognition of test results and vaccination certificates issued in States that are not EU members.

Among the measures that need to be taken so as not to disrupt global supply chains and obstruct international trade, three categories may be singled out.

The first category involves finding an optimum balance between the protection of public health and maintaining the necessary conditions for the functioning of the economy, whose lifeblood is transport.

As business representatives, we are pleased to note that the restrictions on the movement of people and the quarantine and self-isolation requirements imposed by governments do not, as a rule, extend to drivers involved in the international carriage of goods. Governments realize that stopping or delaying road freight transport can lead to serious problems in the provision of essential goods for the population, and to disruptions in industrial production processes because of a lack of raw materials and components.

We believe it is important to ensure mutual recognition of vaccination certificates and PCR test results as soon as possible, and to avoid introducing additional unjustified restrictions.

As for the second category, the managers of transport companies and drivers should, for their part, show due responsibility. Contact between drivers and other individuals should be minimized; when undergoing checks at borders and carrying out loading and unloading operations at warehouses, they are obliged to use personal protection equipment.

It is necessary to accelerate the operation and adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR Convention) and the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention), together with the associated information technology tools, which do not require physical inspection of goods and, therefore, reduce contact between people at borders.

The third category has to do with economic support by governments – for example, the provision of tax relief or the capping of fuel prices.

“Without immediate globally coordinated action, economies, employment and consumers will pay the ultimate price and global economic recovery will be at risk. Road transport and deliveries by truck remain key to keep supply chains moving and must be supported by governments now.”

I have just quoted an appeal to governments contained in an IRU resolution entitled “Emergency Call – Supply Chain Disruptions”, which was adopted on 4 November 2021.

We fully support this appeal and recommend that the OSCE incorporate into its future decisions measures to support the cross-border carriage of goods by road during the recovery of economies from the coronavirus pandemic.

## **2. Ways of developing a low-carbon and climate-resilient transport sector**

Back in 2018, the IRU General Assembly adopted a “Vision for decarbonising commercial road transport leading up to 2050”, which is supported by our Association as well. The IRU and its members have made a voluntary pledge to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions per tonne-kilometre by 30 per cent by 2030.

The successful policy of the past decades aimed at reducing CO<sub>2</sub> levels on the basis of enhancing the design of internal combustion engines and improving the environmental friendliness of the fuel used in such engines has reached a limit beyond which any further reduction of harmful emissions by such means is not economically viable. In this respect, the task is to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by reducing the consumption of fuel oil and also by transitioning to alternative forms of energy.

The aforementioned “Vision” envisages five principal ways of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> levels.

### **1. Enhancement of vehicle technologies**

For example, in accordance with the technical regulation of the Customs Union of the member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union entitled “On the safety of wheeled vehicles”, provision is made for the use of vehicles in the “Euro-6” environmental class in the Russian Federation and such vehicles are manufactured there.

### **2. Alternative fuels**

More than 350,000 cargo vehicles running on natural gas as a motor fuel are registered in our country. Overall, there are more than 1.5 million vehicles of all categories in the Russian Federation that use gas as fuel.

The major Russian company KAMAZ has created prototype vehicles that run on hydrogen fuel, namely a truck and a fuel cell bus: they are currently undergoing operating tests.

From an environmental point of view, hydrogen and electricity are to be preferred. However, a comprehensive approach is essential – that is, one which considers the total volumes of emissions of harmful substances and CO<sub>2</sub> from the production stage to the end-use stage, or, as the phrase goes, “from well to wheel”. According to some estimates, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the generation of electrical energy sometimes even exceed emissions when using traditional hydrocarbon fuel types in internal combustion engines, and hydrogen production can consume up to five times more energy than the energy obtained from using hydrogen as a fuel for vehicles.

### **3. Operational measures**

The use of high capacity vehicles with greater length, volume and/or weight than standard trucks offers significant opportunities for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, further optimizing logistics and improving load factors.

In the Russian Federation, the relevant standards allow for trailer trucks to have a maximum weight of 44 tonnes and a maximum length of 20 m. At present, the main challenge is to increase the maximum permissible axle load on federal highways to the European standard of 11.5 tonnes, and to develop Eurasian transport corridors with a permissible axle load of up to 13 tonnes per axle.

4. Public transport

The transition from private car use to public transport is also one of the most effective ways of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in road transport.

5. Driver behaviour

“Eco-driver” training is the simplest means of reducing fuel consumption.

For example, drivers are provided with such training at the ASMAP Academy. Moreover, financial incentives are used at public transport companies to encourage drivers to save fuel and, thereby, reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

We believe that the aforementioned environmental measures in the field of transport, which, in particular, enable the problem of climate change to be tackled, warrant the attention of the OSCE, which, to the best of our knowledge, has a rather strong mandate when it comes to transport and the environment.

Thank you for your attention.