

Joint letter of like-minded Member States against fragmentation of transport market in the EU

7 June 2016

Dear Commissioner,

We, the transport ministers of the **Republic of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, Hungary, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Slovenia** feel obliged to address you with our concerns regarding the developments in the transport sector at both the EU and national level, where we are witnessing tendencies which might very soon result in a substantial fragmentation of the internal market and divergence from Single European Transport Area.

For some time already, substantive issues in the field of international road transport have been subject to strong politicization. We are concerned that measures which help to increase the competitiveness of the sector - and where Member States could easily reach an agreement - are intentionally interlinked with proposals which are burdensome for transport professionals and controversial for many Member States.

A case in point is the campaign against the so-called social dumping, where instead of focusing on achieving fair competition by combating fraudulent practices and eliminating the phenomenon of illegal work - represented primarily by the abuse of letterbox companies - we are faced with intentions to restrict road transport operations including cabotage, regulate drivers' salaries, and order the drivers to spend their rest periods at hotels.

Developments at national level, particularly in Germany and France, are also a cause for concern as the impact of restrictive national practices on free movement of goods and services should not be underestimated. National minimum wage regulations and other national requirements, such as establishing permanent agencies in the operating market and providing employment documents in a local language, represent a unilateral barrier to cross-border road transport. Although we take note that similar rules are envisaged in the 2014/67/EU Directive, one needs to consider the highly mobile nature of international road transport, which requires an enabling regulatory framework in order to benefit from the internal market.

The abovementioned examples and similar protectionist practices pose a serious challenge to completing the internal market for transport. Taking into consideration the stakeholder feedback, the practicality of these measures remains questionable as they bring about an increase of the administrative burden, transport costs and the number of empty runs, while restricting market access and complicating legislative work on substantive issues.

Dear Commissioner, it is our common belief that the Commission is in the key position to uphold EU principles and avoid the fragmentation of the internal market. In this regard, we urge you and your services to take action against protectionist measures which are lately emerging across the EU and provide a meaningful, clear and simple, non-discriminatory regulatory framework which would secure the effective functioning of the road transport sector in line with the fundamental freedoms of the internal market. We hope that the upcoming Commission road initiatives will take account of this issue which is of major importance to our countries.

Violeta Bulc

Commissioner for Transport

European Commission

cc:

Marianne Thyssen

Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

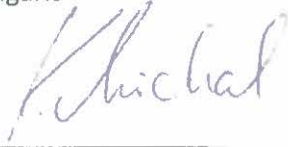
European Commission



Ivaylo Moskovski

Minister

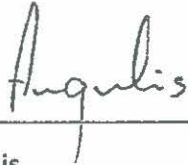
Ministry of Transport,
Information Technology and Communications,
Republic of Bulgaria



Kristen Michal

Minister

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure,
Republic of Estonia



Uldis Augulis

Minister

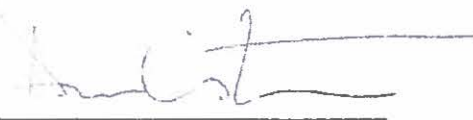
Ministry of Transport, Republic of Latvia



Joe Mizzi

Minister

Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure,
Republic of Malta



Dan Marian Costescu

Minister

Ministry of Transport, Republic of Romania



Peter Gašperšič

Minister

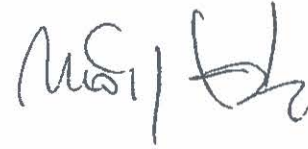
Ministry of Infrastructure, Republic of Slovenia



Dan Ťok

Minister

Ministry of Transport, Czech Republic



László Mosóczy

Minister of State for Transport Policy

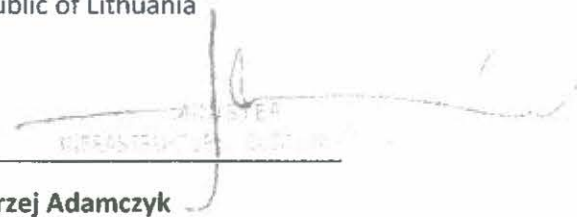
Ministry of National Development, Hungary



Rimantas Sinkevičius

Minister

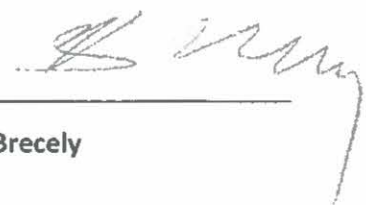
Ministry of Transport and Communications,
Republic of Lithuania



Andrzej Adamczyk

Minister

Ministry of Infrastructure and Construction,
Republic of Poland



Roman Brecely

Minister

Ministry of Transport, Construction
and Regional Development, Slovak Republic