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European Transport Workers' Federation  
Fédération Européenne des Travailleurs des Transports  
Europäische Transportarbeiter-Föderation  
Federación Europea de los Trabajadores del Transporte

Brussels, 20 May 2020

## To the attention of the Transport Commissioner Adina Valean

Dear Commissioner,

### **The ETF calls for no more derogations from driving and rest time in road transport**

We are writing to you to express our belief that further derogations from driving and rest hours regulation (Regulation 561/2006), beyond 31 May 2020, are not needed. Nor is the weekly rest in the vehicle justified, or legal, so we would welcome the European Commission recalling an immediate reintroduction, by all member states, of the ban in this respect.

Since mid-March, with the adoption of COVID-19 lockdown measures across Europe, the ETF has been monitoring – via our network of drivers and trade unions - the need for temporary relaxation of driving and rest time rules. In our view there was but little scope for it, for the period March -May, in the first place already. To our understanding, there has been nothing to transport, cross-border or within domestic markets, to require an increase in driving hours and a reduction in rest times. On the contrary, the economic meltdown had led to many truck drivers being placed on temporary unemployment in each and every member state. Thus, transport needs during COVID-19 lockdown would have been perfectly met by making maximum use of the pools of local drivers, while keeping the rules as they are.

The exit from the COVID-19 crisis will be done gradually and with caution, by member states. The increase in cross-border transport volumes will follow this trend. We presume that there will be a gradual increase in domestic, followed by short-haul cross-border journeys. As said above, member states dispose of a sufficient labour force, locally, to cope with these developments. This also justifies our strong demand for the reintroduction with immediate effect of the ban on weekly rest in the vehicle. There is no long-haul emergency delivery to justify lifting this ban. Nor are there health and safety conditions in place to support this pointless derogation. To this end, we would rather see the need for a temporary suspension by the European Commission of the rule encouraging drivers to consent to spend daily rest onboard their vehicle. Indeed, with this rule, drivers can be made to spend as long as 12 days on the road, in their lorry. This legal provision should be scrapped until on-road sanitary and catering facilities re-open all over Europe.



**President** Frank Moreels

**Acting General Secretary** Livia Spera

**Vice Presidents** Ekaterina Yordanova  
Jan Villadsen



To conclude, in our view, based on the exit strategies of the Member States, the European Commission would develop a prognosis on the gradual re-opening of various economic sectors, doubled by a forecast on how transport will be likely to accompany this process. This will allow an adequate return to normal of transport activities, for both business and drivers, in full compliance with the EU and national rules.

Finally, we take the opportunity to let you know that we will start a campaign on the future of road transport, both passenger and freight, aiming to build a more sustainable sector as we exit the COVID pandemic. We would be happy to share our ideas with you in a direct meeting.

Kind regards,



**Livia Spera**  
ETF General Secretary



**Roberto Parrillo**  
President ETF Road Transport Sector



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