



PRESS RELEASE

SUPPLY CHAIN STAKEHOLDERS ALERT PRESIDENT VON DER LEYEN ABOUT THEIR DISAPPROVAL OF THE CONSORTIA BER EXTENTION

Brussels, 26th of March 2020

We, CLECAT, ETA, ESC, ETF and FEPORT, on behalf of thousands of European freight forwarders, tug owners, shippers and port companies and terminals and transport workers, have sent a letter to the President of the Commission, Ms Ursula Von der Leyen to express our strong disapproval of the decision to prolong the Consortia Block Exemption Regulation (CBER) with another four years without any changes.

In this critical period of the COVID-19 crisis, European supply chains play a crucial role to keep the free flow of goods in Europe going. We take this responsibility, which now takes all our attention, very serious. It is therefore with regret that the value of the stakeholders in the European supply chains has not been fully recognized in the review process of the Consortia BER. DG Competition has rejected our repeated request - as outlined in our Joint Submission - that the Commission only prolongs the CBER for one year. This would have allowed a thorough, fair and more balanced review, taking into account other sources of data than those provided by the representatives of the liner shipping industry.

We have underlined that, in light of the important changes in the market (in view of consolidation, vertical integration and digitalization) over the last five years, it was important to protect the interests of the EU logistics and supply chains. The current legal framework for liner shipping consortia has become obsolete given that most of the carriers operate in alliances and that market concentration is increasing.

During the review process of the Consortia BER which started at the end of 2018, our organizations as well as independent reports from the International Transport Forum have clearly demonstrated, that the benefits of the Regulation to the customers were not achieved. We also alerted the Commission on the impact such consortia can have on port services if clarifications were not made. The Commission, instead, has assessed the workings of the CBER only from the perspective of carriers and the Commission itself (as the competition regulator). There has been no explicit assessment against the experiences and expectations of customers of the services provided by Consortia, other service providers and transport workers.

We look forward to entering into a new dialogue with the Commission once we have managed to overcome the current COVID-19 crisis in the interests of European citizens.

We hope that in the future, the European Commission will, for the sake of equality of treatment, listen more carefully to the users and service providers of the liner shipping companies.

For more information:

CLECAT (European Association for Forwarding, Transport, Logistics and Customs Services)

Mrs Nicolette van der Jagt
Director General
Email: nicolettevdjagt@clecat.org

ESC (European Shippers' Council)

Mr Godfried Smit
Secretary-General
Email: g.smit@europeanshippers.eu

ETA (European Tugowners' Association)

Anna Maria Darmanin
Secretary General
Email: Am.Darmanin@eurotugowners.com

ETF (European Transport Workers' Federation)

Ms Livia Spera
Acting General Secretary
Email: l.spera@etf-europe.org

FEPOR (Federation of European Private Port Companies and Terminals)

Mrs Lamia Kerdjoudj-Belkaid
Secretary General
Email: Lamia.kerdjoudj@feport.eu