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## PRESS RELEASE

### **CLECAT calls on Member States to recognise the role of International Road Freight Transport as the backbone of the EU economy**

Those supporting the proposals of the European Ministers for a '[Road Alliance](#)', promoting a single road haulage market ensuring social rights and more efficient controls, should know that some of these proposals are counter-productive to the competitiveness of European transport and logistics and would frustrate ambitions to reduce carbon emissions through an efficient transport system.

CLECAT, representing the voice of freight forwarders who organise the transport and logistics for their clients - the cargo-owners, calls on governments and policy makers to take a realistic and pragmatic approach at a time when Europe needs to refrain from further protectionism which will ultimately not bring benefits to the European economy and society at large. Overall, the liberalisation of international road freight transport has also allowed social and economic growth all over Europe and remains the backbone of the EU economy.

The Ministers from the 9 Western European Member States propose to facilitate the return to home base of the driver for the regular weekly rest in order to bring balance between work and private life. In view of the highly mobile and international character of the road freight transport operations (cross-trade and bilateral international haulage) such a return to home base for regular weekly rests would not only increase the number of empty vehicles on the road but equally increase the overall number of vehicles on the road, which would counter better planning of supply chains in order to reduce fuel consumption and reduce GHG emissions. Implementation of these sorts of rules into international road freight transport will ultimately undermine the competitiveness of the EU economy.

The other action point the Road Alliance calls for is to strengthen national control practices against fraud. CLECAT supports this as there is a longstanding need to enhance co-operation between Member States and between different authorities of the same Member State. Already by simplifying restrictions on cabotage, and the complexities of compliance, the focus of attention by the legislators falls on compliance regulations that ensure safe operation.

CLECAT recalls that it remains the task of national government to ensure enforcement of regulation and to exchange information and national control practices. Nicolette van der Jagt, Director General of CLECAT said: 'we are worried to see enforcement being replaced more and more by national initiatives and regulation, and an increased administrative burden on freight forwarders – to the level of taking over the role of enforcement. It should be noted that freight forwarders always seek to ensure, before contracting a service from a carrier, that rules are being respected, including the legislation with regards to the minimum wages and driving and resting times. There are however limits to what can reasonably be controlled by them to avoid carriers committing offenses, whether intended or unintended.'

Ms van der Jagt added: ‘overall, it should be noted that cabotage infringements are low or very low and that cases of abuse and fraud are not properly registered. Current discussions in the European Parliament on social dumping disrespect the competent majority of drivers and companies who operate according to the rules – and are victims of burdensome administrative measures.’

The Road Alliance also calls on the ITF to continue to cap the quota which controls market opening, in an effort to further protect European markets. Whilst recognising the political constraints, CLECAT calls on the European Commission to pursue its ambition to further internationalise road freight transport with third countries and regrets the lack of recognition of the importance of international road freight transport for European business.

Ms van der Jagt continued: ‘at a time when many of our members are disillusioned by restrictions being introduced into the market that seek to protect national interests, we are looking forward to further constructive discussions with policy makers in the run-up to the European Commission’s road initiative, as we do believe that it is the responsibility of the European Union to provide clear rules in support of the Single Market. We can therefore support the following initiatives of the Road Alliance:

- Promote the use of eCMR to reduce administrative burden and to increase efficiency and effectiveness of controls.
- Better exchange of information on infringements between national authorities and strengthen the exchange of national control practices and cooperation in the fight against fraud through existing multilateral bodies for police cooperation such as ECR and TISPOL.
- Improve statistics to give us better knowledge to better target the companies with recurring infringement and help the exemplary companies.
- In support of fair competition, develop better cooperation against letterbox companies and other fraud – including shortening the introduction period of the smart digital tachograph.

CLECAT also continues to support and encourage innovations in freight transport such as Intelligent Transport Systems in order to improve the technology and the performance of road freight transport as well as to reduce congestion and pollution.

For more information:

Nicolette van der Jagt  
CLECAT – *The European Voice of Freight Forwarders and Logistics*  
Rue du Commerce 77  
B 1040 BRUXELLES  
tel + 32 2 503 4705  
[nicolettevdjagt@clecat.org](mailto:nicolettevdjagt@clecat.org)  
[www.clecat.org](http://www.clecat.org)