

Ms Ursula von der Leyen
President European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

By email only

11 March 2021

Dear President von der Leyen,

Following numerous reports from our members – European freight forwarders, logistics service providers and shippers – on the ongoing difficulties in transporting freight in the most efficient and sustainable way from Italy to Germany and the rest of Europe – and vice-versa – through the Tyrol region, CLECAT and ESC would like to express their concerns on the current situation, in view of the additional burden and costs for the industry, as well as the higher emissions of supply chains.

We welcomed the appeal of EU Transport Commissioner Vălean to the Tyrolean government last year to ease the existing traffic bans on heavy-goods vehicles driving through Tyrol, which were extended even further at the beginning of this year. In this respect, we refer to the stricter night driving ban (the removal of exemptions for Euro VI trucks on the A12 Inntal Autobahn) and stricter Euro class driving ban (the removal of exemptions for Euro V trucks, which have previously been excluded, to drive through Tyrol during the day). Notably, these new measures have to be considered in addition to the already existing restrictions, such as the sectoral driving ban, the weekend driving ban, the driving ban calendar with additional driving bans on certain Saturdays in the year, the “block clearance/processing” and the driving bans at motorway junctions of the A12 and A13.

We acknowledge that by introducing various traffic bans for heavy-goods vehicles the Tyrolean government is seeking to address the air quality concerns in the region. However, the impact of these measures for freight transport is that congestion during the day time has increased, leading also to more emissions. In consideration of alternative solutions, we witness a lack of capacity offered by Austrian railways on the ROLA services, in particular during the night time. In our view, the ROLA services are an alternative solution, but it is far from an efficient one, given the short stretch of the rail freight part (less than 100 km), meaning that it cannot be considered as combined transport. Hence, as long as the alternative railway solutions and/or electricity and sustainable alternative fuels, as well as the respective charging and refuelling infrastructure, are not widely accessible for heavy-goods vehicles along the Brenner, the continued assurance of road freight transport must be considered; simply preventing the most environmentally-friendly trucks of today, without appropriate alternatives in place, has serious economic consequences for the areas concerned.

We furthermore argue that national initiatives regulating vehicle access to infrastructure in order to improve the environmental impact of transport and logistics must be proportionate. In this respect,

we note with interest that there is significant political pressure from those considering the driving bans disproportionate and arguing that they put the free movement of goods via the Brenner Pass at risk. As there are currently no sufficient alternatives to moving goods by road, trade barriers are being created for the countries neighbouring of Austria. It must be recognised that progress with the finalisation of the railway system has been extremely slow. For instance, it was announced recently that the construction of Brenner Base Tunnel, which would provide additional capacity and make Alp-crossing rail freight transport more competitive, is being delayed again. Moreover, there is a lack of progress in the upgrading of the access routes in both Germany and Italy.

On behalf of European freight forwarders and shippers, we therefore further encourage you and your colleagues in the European Commission to seek a proportionate solution for addressing the current situation with transalpine transit, in order to maintain healthy and sustainable supply chains and prevent the negative economic consequences for European businesses and citizens.

Yours sincerely,



Nicolette van der Jagt
Director General
CLECAT



Godfried Smit
Secretary General
European Shippers' Council