

WCO and IRU joint statement on responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on cross border transport

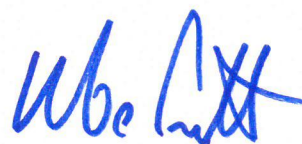
The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, while above all a public health crisis, presents the world with unprecedented economic challenges. Trade has dramatically declined, supply chains are disrupted and the restrictions to cross-border and transit freight transport that have been put in place could aggravate the pandemic's economic impact.

As each economy depends on the efficiency of transport, including road transport, especially in this critical time, and bearing in mind the gradual lifting of confinement measures, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) jointly call on Customs administrations worldwide to:

- Ensure coordinated cross-border interventions in cooperation with other national border agencies and implement international standards such as the TIR Convention, as appropriate;
- Use the TIR system, and its IT tools, wherever possible, which allow secure transport under Customs control with limited physical checks and less contact between people at borders, thus reducing the risk of spreading the virus and protecting Customs officers and drivers;
- Designate priority (green) lanes for commercial vehicles to reduce border waiting times and introduce other measures to ensure supply chain continuity;
- Avoid closing borders to the international transport of goods, particularly for relief goods and personnel and essential goods; and,
- Avoid unnecessary checking of commercial vehicles at borders.

The WCO and IRU express their readiness to support their respective Members in the implementation of relevant instruments, tools and programmes and will work together to coordinate their respective efforts.

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