

## Circular

30 April 2020

Dear Member,

On 29 April, the European Commission adopted a package of measures, aiming to provide a relief to the transport sector by removing administrative burdens and increasing flexibility. The package includes measures to support the aviation, rail, maritime, inland navigation and road sectors, as the governments are starting to relax the restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the new Commission proposals and the Transport Council conclusions, CLECAT, ESC and EEA issued a [joint statement](#) today, calling for the continued application of EU Green Lanes, as they will be key in preserving the smooth transport of goods as general traffic volumes increase, and for upholding the current flexibility on driving and rest times rules, especially when private vehicle traffic is no longer restricted.

The new Commission proposals, which can be found in attachment to this Circular, are summarised below:

- To facilitate the completion of certain formalities required under EU law, the Commission has put forward a [proposal](#), allowing for the **validity date of certain certificates, licences and other authorisations**, which would expire between 1 March 2020 and 31 August 2020, to be extended for a reasonable period of time (in most cases – by six months). Certain periodic checks in road, rail, inland waterways transport and maritime security will also be postponed temporarily.
- For aviation, the relief [proposal](#) addresses **ground-handling services**, authorising the extension of contracts to avoid complex tenders, and allowing concessions that will prevent airports from getting blocked should ground-handling companies go bankrupt. Under that proposal, if a groundhandling service provider would cease its activities before the end of its appointment, the airport managing body would be able to nominate a groundhandling service provider without a tender for the period of maximum 6 months. The proposal also modifies air carrier licensing rules temporarily to ease financial problems linked to the coronavirus. Moreover, it introduces a derogation from the emergency provisions on air traffic, allowing Member States to introduce derogatory measures for more than 14 days.
- A [proposal](#) to amend the regulation on **port infrastructure charges** will give the Member States and port authorities the flexibility to defer, reduce or lift port infrastructure charges for port users, in order to provide shipping companies with liquidity.
- For rail, the Commission has issued a [proposal](#) to extend by three months the deadline by which some Member States must transpose EU law on **rail safety and interoperability** in the ambit of the 4<sup>th</sup> Railway Package. The delay until 16 September 2020 shall ensure that the sector has legal clarity and can focus its time and resources on coronavirus recovery. Moreover, the time limit for renewal of (single) safety certificates and safety authorisations shall be extended by six months.

The Commission has noted that additional proposals may follow in the coming weeks.

The Commission has also responded positively to the requests from 11 Member States for temporary exemption from EU rules on driving times and rest periods. A further 9 Member States have now also requested temporary exemption and will receive a positive decision in the coming weeks. CLECAT has encouraged such decisions from the beginning of the crisis and has recently sent a [letter](#) to the Commission and the Member States, suggesting that the relaxation of rules is sustained throughout the transition phase.

Yesterday, EU Transport Ministers held their second informal videoconference on the implications of the COVID-19 for transport, during which they welcomed the latest legislative proposals by the Commission and called for their swift adoption. Overall, Ministers supported future work on the EU's exit and recovery strategy, while reaffirming the importance of a coordinated approach in order to prepare proportionate and non-discriminatory exit and recovery measures for transport.

EU Transport Ministers and Commissioner Velez acknowledged that the future discussions on the Multiannual Financial Framework and the Recovery Fund should fully reflect the needs of the EU transport sector, especially in terms of liquidity and investments needed for the recovery of all the different stakeholders in the sector. The Ministers also called on the Commission to present sector-specific guidelines for gradual easing and phasing-out of confinement measures, aiming to harmonise rules and procedures on sanitary measures for different transport modes. A full summary of the conference, prepared by the Croatian Presidency, is attached to this Circular.

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- [Ci105Agen\\_Ec Proposal Validity Of Documents Covid-19.pdf](#)
  - [Ci105Bgen\\_Ec Proposal Operation Of Air Services Covid-19.pdf](#)
  - [Ci105Cgen\\_Ec Proposal Port Infrastructure Charges Covid-19.pdf](#)
  - [Ci105Dgen\\_Ec Proposal Rail Safety And Interoperability Covid-19.pdf](#)
  - [Ci105Egen\\_Eu 2020 Hr Presidency Summary Vtc.pdf](#)