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Ms Mariya Gabriel
Commissioner
Digital Economy and Society
European Commission
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1049 - Brussels
Belgium



By email and by post

Geneva, 4 June 2018

DIGITALISATION OF THE TIR PROCEDURE

Dear Ms Gabriel,

IRU welcomes the publication of the third mobility package that prioritises the digitalisation of freight documents and operations. In a globalised economy, road transport has become a vital production tool and as such any penalty on road transport is an even greater penalty on the economy as a whole. In times of protectionist tendencies and a volatile global economy, the only way forward is to provide bold leadership and to stand up for trade and transport facilitation.

In this respect, the global road transport industry, represented by IRU and its national member associations, urges action to support the acceleration of the effective digitalisation of the only global, tried and tested customs facilitation tool: the United Nations TIR Convention.

As highlighted by the third wave of the mobility package, the future of trade, transport and customs is digital. As much as we need electronic freight transport documents, the industry also needs a globally applicable and digital customs transit system. Modernisation of the TIR Convention to this end is urgently needed and the United Nations, supported by the European Commission (DG TAXUD), contracting parties, and IRU, are working on that.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the UNECE and IRU recently joined forces by signing, on 6 October 2017, a five-year Memorandum of Understanding to advance the digitalisation of TIR procedures through the launch or extension of so-called eTIR Pilot Projects for interested countries. At the same time, we have to recognise that customs administrations throughout the world, notably those in China, Pakistan, India and the Middle East, are taking the lead and turning to fully digital procedures today.

Trade is not ready to wait for lengthy negotiations and it is time to make TIR fully digital. The TIR system was used last year for more than several tens of thousands of imports in the EU. Business needs to have the choice to use a modern TIR system for trading with non-EU partners. Germany and Italy alone received more than 30,000 trucks operated with TIR in 2017. TIR is a vital ingredient for ensuring trade and prosperity in Europe.

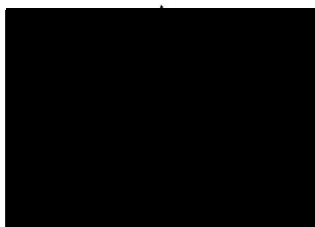
We therefore propose the following action plan:

- Digital TIR should be formally operational as soon as possible, but no later than the end of 2019

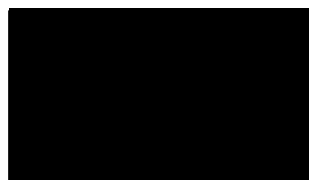
- Pilot project implementation of digital TIR should be accelerated immediately, including projects with EU countries
- All actors will need to provide ongoing support in the legal negotiations at UNECE to modernise the TIR system through a new Annex 11 to the TIR Convention.

The undersigned trust that, under your leadership and guidance, this proactive approach can be endorsed and IRU remains at your disposal for a follow-up meeting at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



President



Secretary General

