

【欧州】 【Common】

Common - COVID-related development in transport: Preparing for future crisis: The European Commission adopts Contingency Plan for Transport

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【概要 : Summary】

The transport system is critical to European society, economy, businesses, and supply chains, contributing around 5% to EU GDP and employing more than 10 million people in Europe. However, the transport sector is also vulnerable against crisis situations like the COVID-19 pandemic, which seriously affected the transport businesses. In fact, not only the movement of people but also freight transport had been affected during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to a lack of coordination of national measures and the temporary closing of borders.

The Russian invasion in the Ukraine and the EU 's sanctions in a reaction to it have created many challenges for the EU' s transport sector, due to the destruction of Ukrainian transport infrastructure, the rise of oil and gas prices, broken supply chains, among others. These impacts of the war add to the still existing challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the transport sector has been deeply affected by these two crisis, on 23 May 2022, the European Commission presented a Contingency Plan for Transport to strengthen the resilience of the EU 's transport sector and to help the sector dealing with current and future crises. The Commission' s Contingency Plan for Transport (COM (2022) 211 final) is based on lessons learnt

and initiatives taken during the COVID-19 pandemic and it creates a framework for a crisis-proof and resilient EU transport sector.

The Contingency Plan for Transport introduces guiding principles and a toolbox for dealing with any type of transport crisis to ensure the introduction of proportionate, transparent, and non-discriminatory crisis response measures, which can ensure that the EU' s Single Market continues to function. It is essential that the EU Member States apply the contingency principles and make full use of the toolbox to matching the different tools to the specific problem that needs to be addressed. The European Commission will actively steer the process to build preparedness and to respond to immediate challenges.

One of the currently most important issues is to ensure that the Ukraine can export grain, but also import the goods it needs. Therefore, the Commission will coordinate the Solidarity Lanes contact points network and the related matchmaking platform.

By improving the EU' s transport sector' s "resilience" the Commission delivers on one of its commitments included in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy (COM (2020) 789 final).

【記事 : Article】

1. The European Commission's measures to support the transport sector in major crisis situations

1.1. The EU's measures to support transport connectivity during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, which unfolded since the beginning of the year 2020 also in Europe, hit the EU's transport and tourism sectors hard due to the imposed restrictions of the free movement and lockdown measures in almost all EU Member States. In spring 2020, about 90% of flights were cancelled in the EU, and travels were restricted from third countries as well as within the EU, from one EU Member State to another, and within the individual EU Member States.

Each EU Member State introduced individual measures in a reaction on their specific situation in the COVID-19 pandemic and due to the lack of coordination of national measures the transport sector within Member States, but also cross-border transport operations were hampered (COM(2022) 211 final). Therefore, during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, since also freight transport had been affected by the closing of borders within the Schengen Area, the Commission's response focused on ensuring the uninterrupted flow of goods and supply of transport services within the EU. The aim was to achieve a coordinated approach between the EU and the Member States regarding the issues under divided responsibility like border control (COM(2022) 211 final). Therefore, the European Commission published a Communication on the implementation of the Green Lanes in freight transport (C (2020) 1897 final) on 23 March 2020 to improve the border management to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services in the EU (C (2020) 1897 final). The Commission invited Member States to designate TEN-T network internal border crossings as "green lane" border crossings for the free and

seamless passage of all freight vehicles carrying any type of goods freight transport. The Green Lanes system has kept EU traffic flowing during the pandemic and enabled transport workers cross borders in a non-discriminatory way during the lockdown times. This measure therefore was able to reduce the economic impact of COVID-19 restrictions on transport companies and has supported the EU's economic recovery (COM(2022) 211 final).

Furthermore, with the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2020/698 (Omnibus I) regarding the renewal or extension of certain certificates, licences and authorisations and the postponement of certain periodic checks and periodic training in certain areas of transport legislation, and Regulation (EU) 2021/267 (Omnibus II) regarding the extension of certain periods referred to in Regulation (EU) 2020/698, the EU extended the periods set in the relevant EU transport laws and ensured that transport companies and individuals concerned were able to continue their activities during the pandemic.

Regarding the movement of persons, the EU Digital COVID Certificate based on Regulation (EU) 2021/953 and the EU Digital Passenger Locator Form secured - where possible - the continuation of safe travel across the EU. The EU Digital COVID Certificate and efforts to establish a coordinated approach to travel at EU level have been broadly welcomed by travel and tourism associations as an important tool to revive the tourism sector. In case certain restrictions to free movement based on public health would still be in place after 30 June 2022, the Commission proposed to extend the legal basis of the EU Digital COVID Certificate until 30 June 2023 (COM/2022/211 final).

Besides introducing measures to maintain and support transport connectivity during the pandemic, the EU also provided funding for key transport operations in response to the COVID-19

pandemic. The Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) to help Member States respond to the COVID-19 crisis allowed EUR 220 million to quickly be made available for transport related actions, including the transport of cargo related to the COVID-19 crisis, for transport of patients, and medical teams (COM(2022) 211 final).

1.2. Russian invasion in Ukraine and its impact on transport

Meanwhile, the Russian war against Ukraine is seriously affecting the EU's economy and transport system, but the destruction of Ukrainian transport infrastructure and the supply chains have still not shown their full effect (COM (2022) 211 final).

However, what is already visible as first impacts of the Russian invasion is the rise of oil and gas prices, and broken supply chains for the export of grain from Ukraine and the import of all necessary goods to Ukraine. The conflict has also highlighted the need to reduce EU's dependency on the imported fossil fuels from Russia (European Commission 2022).

However, the conflict also shows that the EU has learnt from the COVID-19 crisis by responding quickly to a new crisis. On 12 May 2022, the Commission presented an action plan for EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes to facilitate Ukraine's agricultural export and bilateral trade with the EU (COM (2022) 217 final). Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its blockade of Ukrainian ports, Ukrainian grain and other agricultural goods need to find alternative logistics routes to reach their destination. With the Communication COM (2022) 217 final, the Commission sets out an action plan consisting of a set of actions to help Ukraine exporting its agricultural produce, but also to import the goods it needs, from humanitarian aid to animal feed and fertilisers.

The Commission, together with the EU Member States and stakeholders, identified some priority actions. The planned actions include making available additional freight rolling stock, vessels and lorries; to ensure sufficient capacity of transport networks and transshipment terminals for Ukrainian agricultural export; to promote maximum flexibility and adequate staffing for customs operations and other inspections; to identify possibilities for storage of Ukrainian agricultural goods on the territory of the EU; and to improve the EU-Ukraine connectivity in the medium term by increasing the infrastructure capacity of new export corridors and establish new infrastructure connections in the framework of the reconstruction of Ukraine (COM (2022) 217 final). On 12 May 2022, the Commission also approved a high-level understanding with Ukraine agreeing on new, indicative maps for the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) for Ukraine, as part of the Commission's policy on extending the TEN-T to neighbouring countries (C(2022) 3204 final). Meanwhile, this new priority is also reflected in the amendments to the Revision of the TEN-T Regulation as proposed on 27 July 2022 (COM (2022) 384 final), to downgrade the improvements of connections to Russia and Belarus, while the connections to Ukraine and Moldova need to be upgraded.

2. The Sustainability and Smart Mobility Strategy to increase resilience against situations of crisis

During the COVID-19 pandemic the importance of a well-functioning single market in the EU and the preservation of supply chains, connectivity and transport activities in a coordinated European approach have proven to be of highest importance to overcome any crisis and to strengthen the EU's strategic autonomy and resilience (COM (2020) 789 final). The Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy (COM (2020) 789 final) of 9.12.2020 is

expected to help the EU transport sector to become a green, digital, and more resilient sector. To achieve the 2050 GHG emission reduction target, the transport sector will have to arrive at a zero-emission level while achieving a higher level of resilience against future crisis. Therefore, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy COM (2020) 789 final contains a commitment by the European Commission to reinforce the Single Market by completing the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) by 2030 and to support the transport sector by building back better through increased public and private investments in the modernisation of fleets in all modes after the COVID-19 pandemic (COM (2020) 789 final).

Furthermore, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy COM (2020) 789 final also includes the provision that the European Commission prepares a crisis contingency plan to ensure business continuity and a coordinated response in the transport sector in a situation of crisis.

Accordingly, this Contingency Plan for Transport was presented by the European Commission on 23 May 2022, not only in the light of lessons learnt from past crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, but also reflecting on the present crisis of transport problems triggered by the Russian invasion in the Ukraine and possible future crisis situations.

3. The European Commission's Contingency Plan for Transport

In the past two years, the EU transport sector has been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and most recently by Russia's invasion in the Ukraine. These two major crisis underline the importance of introducing measures and plans on improving the preparedness with a set of comprehensive tools to deal with these crisis proactively, as outlined in the Commission's Communication COM (2022) 211 final. There is also

a need to continue enhancing and reinforcing early warning systems for actionable information to allow for informed decision-making, and the translation into early action. Since there is no ready-made solution for addressing future unpredictable crisis, the best solution is to improve the knowledge of vulnerabilities and risks and mitigate them (COM (2022) 211 final).

Therefore, on 23 May 2022, the European Commission presented a Contingency Plan for Transport to strengthen the resilience of EU transport in times of crisis, and to help deal with future crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Commission's Contingency Plan for the European transport sector for pandemics and other major crises is based on lessons learnt and initiatives taken during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Contingency Plan intends to improve the "resilience" of transport services across the EU for the next crisis and creates a framework for a crisis-proof and resilient EU transport sector. Thereby, the Contingency Plan delivers on the Commission's commitment to increase the EU's transport sector's resilience, as included in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy (COM (2022) 211 final, COM (2020) 789 final).

The Contingency Plan for Transport introduces guiding principles that ensure crisis response measures are proportionate, transparent, non-discriminatory, to ensure that the EU's Single Market can continue to function as it should (COM (2022) 211 final).

Based on lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Communication on Green Lanes (C(2020) 1897) among others, many of the tools and principles proposed in the Commission's Communication COM (2022) 211 final have already proven to be useful to help solve problems in a situation of crisis. While the plan focuses on the transport sector, the Commission will also address the broader issues of the free

movement of goods, services and persons in the EU's Single Market and the availability of products and services in the forthcoming Single Market Emergency Instrument (COM (2022) 211 final). Therefore, while some parts of the plan predominantly focus on the EU response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is also included a forward-looking crisis preparedness part of principles. The Commission adds that the Contingency Plan for Transport was designed to be "proportionate, transparent and non-discriminatory" and allow the EU's single market to continue operating "as it should" (Gill 2022).

The Contingency Plan for Transport proposes a "toolbox" of 10 actions addressing transport contingencies for dealing with any type of transport crisis like natural disasters, pandemics, terrorist attacks, cyberattacks, ransomware, military conflicts, bridge or tunnel collapses or other infrastructure failures, and power outages (COM (2022) 211 final). The actions include emergency crisis-response measures, ranging from a longer-term preparatory actions to tools that can be used for an immediate action. The common objective is to be better prepared for a swift response to any accident or event capable of causing severe disruption to the EU transport system (COM (2022) 211 final).

The plan also stresses the relevance of the Green Lanes principles C(2020) 1897 final, which ensure that land freight can cross borders in less than 15 minutes and reinforces the role of the Network of Contact Points in national transport authorities (European Commission 2022). Both have proved crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in the current crisis caused by Russian war in the Ukraine (European Commission 2022).

4. The Contingency Plan for Transport's areas of action

4.1. Making EU transport laws fit for crisis

Based on the European Commission's Communication COM (2022) 211 final, the 10 areas of action include action to respond to any kind of crisis that could affect the transport sector. The first area of action includes the revision of EU transport laws to make them fit for crisis. This includes amendments to laws, where necessary, and provisions on emergency and major crisis situations. Accordingly, the Commission has proposed certain provisions in the recent revisions, among others, regarding the TEN-T network plans, including reinforcing cross-border TEN-T sections and Intelligent Transport System laws. Reinforcing the cross-border TEN-T sections, the increase of multimodality through the terminals and the shift to sustainable modes of transport are examples of longer-term actions to improve crisis preparedness (COM (2022) 211 final).

4.2. Ensuring adequate support for the transport sector

Strengthening the resilience of the transport sector goes hand in hand with improving the EU's transport system's connectivity and sustainability. The Commission will continue to support the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), which will help make the transport sector across all modes more resilient. Overall, Member States will spend EUR 70.7 billion on investments and reforms related to green transition of transport (COM (2022) 211 final). Since the current geopolitical context with the Russian invasion in Ukraine makes the reduction of the EU's dependency on fossil fuels even more urgent, the Commission's REPowerEU plan (COM(2022) 108 final) of 18 May 2022 will implement measures to make available resources at European and national levels.

The Commission could also consider legislative measures providing financial relief and temporary

State aid to the transport sector based on a case-by-case analysis. COM (2022) 211 final

4.3. Ensuring free movement of goods, services, and people

Regarding the free movement of goods, the Green Lanes system, which was successfully introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, can be reactivated when necessary to address any new crisis. Furthermore, the Commission is planning to propose a Single Market Emergency Instrument in 2022 to provide a framework for implementing crisis response measures important for the transport sector, regarding the free movement of goods, services and persons, availability of products and services, and transparency and coordination.

Regarding the impact of the Russian war in the Ukraine and to help humanitarian convoys cross EU-Ukraine borders fast and safely, the Commission has presented a Communication for setting up emergency support lanes for humanitarian convoys and trucks. The Communication on operational guidelines for external border management instructs Member States to designate special lanes at their border crossing points as emergency support lanes COM (2022) 211 final.

4.4. Managing refugee flows and repatriating stranded passengers and transport workers

In non-EU countries, EU Delegations and Member States with embassies or consulates should continue to step up consular crisis preparedness through local contingency plans. Joint EU Consular Crisis Response Teams, including the possible participation of unrepresented Member States, should be considered and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the rescEU reserve will be mobilised as necessary (COM (2022) 211 final).

In future crises, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism will support repatriating EU citizens stranded outside the EU (COM (2022) 211 final).

In line with the March 2020 Green Lanes Communication, the EU Member States should set up transit corridors for private drivers and their passengers (regardless of their nationality) and all EU citizens should be able to be repatriated. Member States, whose citizens are in transit in another EU Member State should try to help that other country repatriate the affected citizens, among others (COM (2022) 211 final).

4.5. Ensuring minimum transport connectivity and passenger protection

When transport services are under pressure due to a crisis, it is important to maintain adequate collective public transport running in and between cities and regions. This might be particularly challenging for border areas, where providing essential services may depend on cross-border workers. The EU public transport rules for rail, road and maritime transport already provide for an urgent procedure under certain conditions (COM (2022) 211 final). Member States should therefore consider urgent awards of public service contracts for collective transport services or amending existing contracts.

The minimum connectivity in crises could also be ensured by strengthening the resilience of transport infrastructure and operators. In the Commission's proposal for a new TEN-T regulation, Member States would have to improve the TEN-T network's security and resilience to climate change, environmental and human-made disasters, and other exceptional events (COM (2022) 211 final).

4.6. Sharing transport information at all levels

Information sharing among the main actors, like the Commission and other EU institutions including Parliament and Council, Member States'

authorities including at subnational level, transport companies, passengers, transport workers, businesses, and transport organisations and associations is most important to solving problems. Regular discussion and cooperation at international level (e.g., International Civil Aviation Organisation, International Maritime Organisation and World Health Organisation) is also important for an effective crisis response (COM (2022) 211 final). Accordingly, protocols on the most suitable communication/dissemination channels will be needed in a crisis scenario.

4.7. Strengthening transport policy coordination

The Network of National Transport Contact Points will continue to be the centre point for transport crisis discussions to avoid parallel decision-making and to allow for quick reaction.

The Commission proposes to make it a more permanent network to serve as a forum to discuss and implement contingency measures and their deactivation. The Network should have a wider range of tasks, ready to react quickly at any moment. It will bring together representatives of Member States' transport ministries and agencies and EU transport agencies is chaired by the Commission. Other parties, such as other EU agencies and bodies, representatives of other Member State ministries, and transport stakeholders, could be invited to participate in discussions on a case-by-case basis. The Commission will ensure information flow between the Network, IPCR, other Council groups and EU and international forums (COM (2022) 211 final).

4.8. Strengthening cybersecurity

Current EU aviation and maritime legislation already obliges authorities and stakeholders to perform risk assessments that identify critical data and systems and put in place suitable measures addressing any residual risks. These measures should be further developed to improve

cyber awareness, cyber resilience, training, and information sharing. The Commission will step up cybersecurity cooperation with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), the EU Agency for Railways (ERA), the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and ENISA. The Commission and EU agencies will continue supporting the development of cybersecurity protocols to ensure business continuity in an incident.

ENISA has already issued guidance on managing cybersecurity risks in the rail sector and in ports, while EASA is working on legislation to ensure safety in civil aviation (COM (2022) 211 final). EMSA is working with Member States and the maritime industry to identify potential cybersecurity gaps and based on the results, the Commission will work on cybersecurity measures for ships (COM (2022) 211 final).

4.9. Testing transport contingency

Building on existing processes, the Commission and relevant agencies propose to carry out contingency tests to assess the crisis preparedness of the transport industry. These tests should be integrated into the Commission's general crisis management system and be part of existing EU exercises, as far as possible to maximise input and results (COM (2022) 211 final). The transport industry and responsible authorities should consider putting in place backup systems and redundant solutions like alternative routes, diversified supplies, alternative fuels, backup databases, uninterrupted connectivity, and other technological systems and infrastructures to respond to different crises and to strengthen resilience (COM (2022) 211 final).

4.10. Cooperation with international partners

The COVID-19 pandemic and Russian war against Ukraine have highlighted the importance of the EU's cooperation with the Western Balkans for the green lanes to work effectively beyond the EU, as well as of extending the TEN-T network (COM (2022) 211 final). Similarly, the recent crises have also shown the importance of paying particular attention to Central Asia as well as the remote areas and overseas territories, given their specific transport needs.

Furthermore, to streamline the procedure for adopting non-essential travel restrictions and the planned amendment to the Schengen Borders Code highlight the need for a good cooperation with non-EU countries.

5. Conclusion

In past two years, the pandemic, and the Russian war in Ukraine, have shown again the impact of major crisis situations on the EU transport system. While the full impact of the war in Ukraine on the EU's transport system is still unknown and another crisis could have a systemic impact on the transport sector, an effective response mechanism should be put in place to make the entire transport system more resilient and to make a quick response to any future crisis possible.

Therefore, the Commission has presented the Contingency Plan for Transport including a toolbox for dealing with any type of crisis with a possible impact on the EU's transport system. In fact, the resilience of this sector needs to be improved as well as the coordination between EU Member States as keys to the EU's response to these challenges.

The Contingency Plan initiative is the Commission's response to the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy's provision that the European Commission should prepare a crisis contingency plan to ensure a coordinated response

in the transport sector in a situation of crisis and to increase the transport sector's resilience against crisis.

The Contingency Plan for Transport introduces guiding principles ensuring that crisis response measures are proportionate, transparent, non-discriminatory, and that the Single Market continues to function also in an event of crisis. It is essential that Member States apply the contingency principles and make full use of the contingency toolbox, matching the different tools to the specific problems to be addressed. The European Commission and the Member States intend to use this Contingency Plan to respond to immediate challenges and future crisis situations affecting the EU's transport sector and to increase its resilience.

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