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**Ministry of Transport and Communications from Bulgaria**

**Georgi GVOZDEIKOV - Minister**

***Ref.: request for urgent measures against the abusive and discriminatory practices of the operator of the truck parking built in Ruse with the support of the Bulgarian authorities***

**Dear Minister,**

The National Union of Road Hauliers from Romania - UNTRR signals the unacceptable discrimination of Romanian road hauliers in Ruse, where Romanian drivers are obliged to wait for 24-36 hours in the illegal truck parking opened this month at the border, while Bulgarian and Ukrainian hauliers are allowed to cross the border. UNTRR calls upon the Ministry of Transport and Communications from Bulgaria for the immediate elimination of the abusive and discriminatory practices of the operator of the truck parking built in Ruse with the support of the Bulgarian authorities.

The road transport industry is the most affected sector by Romania's and Bulgaria's non-accession to the Schengen area, facing queues of tens of kilometres of trucks at the Romanian-Bulgarian border crossing point at Giurgiu-Ruse, which block the activity of road carriers, causing delays in the delivery of goods to customers that affect logistics chains, production processes and the supply of cities and lead to increased costs for road hauliers and end consumers in both countries. UNTRR has addressed many interventions to the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the relevant authorities, including the Presidency of Romania in the context of this year's discussions regarding the establishment of a Romania-Bulgaria Strategic Partnership, requesting the urgent elimination of controls at the border crossing points between Romania and Bulgaria for international traffic of trucks.

While the road transport industry calls for the elimination of checks at the Romanian-Bulgarian border crossing points and the creation of special lanes to facilitate the transit of cars and trucks registered in Romania and Bulgaria, paradoxically, the Bulgarian authorities have supported the development of a private parking area for trucks, on the land of the municipality of Ruse, which started operating from June 2023 without any official announcement, without public information and contact on the web, email or media. In order to cross the border, Romanian road hauliers are obliged to park their trucks only in the parking spaces of this private operator, which applies discriminatory rates for Romanian trucks that are excessively higher than the rates for Bulgarian trucks.

Considering these worrying developments signalled by the Romanian road hauliers, UNTRR management went to the border crossing point in Ruse where the private operator supported by the Bulgarian authorities has built a truck parking area with 700 lots, which is to be further expanded with another 200 lots, the work being under execution at this moment. Although the Bulgarian authorities declare that it is not mandatory to use this truck parking area, however, if Romanian road hauliers do not have their trucks registered in the system of the respective parking, their trucks are not received at the border crossing point because they do not get to their turn unless they are registered in the parking system. Thus, the private truck parking area built with the support of the Bulgarian authorities at the border crossing point in Ruse is equipped with monitoring screen panels, where each truck driver can see how many trucks are ahead, but not the waiting time at



the border, which is depending on how fast customs work. Upon entering the parking lot, each truck receives a pager that vibrates and rings 10 minutes in advance to notify the driver when it's his turn to cross the border. When exiting the parking lot, Romanian drivers must pay a discriminatory rate of 25 Euros compared to Bulgarian drivers, who pay a rate which is 3-4 times lower, of only 15 Leva, approximately 7 Euros. The parking fees are not correlated with the time spent in the parking lot.

In the absence of any measures, this practice will expand and the border authorities will create waiting times as long as possible to justify the establishment of such parking areas and such abusive and discriminatory practices, contrary to the objectives of *increasing the fluidity of movement of the different means of transport within the Community*, established by European Regulation no. 1100/2008 on the *elimination of controls performed at the frontiers of Member States in the field of road transport*. Thus, according to European legislation, *controls on the weights and dimensions of trucks shall not be performed as frontier controls but solely as part of the normal control procedures applied in a non-discriminatory fashion throughout the territory of a Member State., and vehicles may be subject, as regards common standards on weights, to random checks and, as regards common standards on dimensions, only to checks where there is a suspicion of non-compliance with its provisions.*

The National Union of Road Hauliers from Romania - UNTRR considers that the Bulgarian authorities in Ruse have a revolting approach: instead of collaborating with the Romanian authorities for the urgent accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen area and the elimination of the current blockages at the Romanian-Bulgarian borders, the Bulgarian authorities support the construction of a private truck parking area which further restricts international truck traffic at Romanian-Bulgarian border crossing point in the Giurgiu-Ruse. If Bulgaria continues these practices, then we consider that Romania must explore decoupling from Bulgaria in order to join the Schengen area.

UNTRR calls for your urgent action, as the Minister of Transport and Communications of Bulgaria and we ask you to undertake immediate measures against the abusive practices of the operator of the truck parking area built in Ruse with the support of the Bulgarian authorities, in order to eliminate the obligation imposed on Romanian trucks to park in the parking lots of this private operator and the obligation of the Romanian road hauliers to pay discriminatory parking rates in order to cross the border and get home to Romania.

Expressing our trust in your support, we thank you and assure you of our highest consideration.

**Secretary General,**

**Radu DINESCU**