

# COVID-19 transport measures: Council adopts temporary flexibility for licences and port services



The EU is adapting certain rules for different transport sectors to help companies and authorities cope in the extraordinary circumstances created by the coronavirus crisis. Today, the Council adopted temporary measures **enabling the extension of the validity of certain certificates and licences in road, rail and waterborne transport, and relaxing the rules on charging ships for the use of port infrastructures.**

Enabling the extension of the validity of licences and certificates will provide the flexibility and legal certainty needed to maintain our supply chains and ensure continued mobility by road, rail, sea and inland waterways, while safeguarding safety and security. The possibility of waiving port infrastructure charges will help mitigate the serious negative impact of the crisis on the shipping sector.

*Oleg Butković, Croatian Minister for the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, President of the Council*

The **regulation enabling the extension of the validity of certificates and licences** will support those transport operators, individuals and national administrations that, owing to the coronavirus restrictions, are having difficulties fulfilling certain administrative formalities before the expiry of the relevant deadlines. This applies for instance to driving licences, roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and boat-masters' certificates.

Certain periodic checks in the road, rail, inland navigation and shipping sectors will also be postponed temporarily, as they may not be feasible in current circumstances.

The text takes into account the fact that, given the differences in the spread of the pandemic throughout Europe, some member states are able to continue to deliver specific licences or certificates, while others find it difficult or impossible to do so. However, even if a country continues to issue licences itself, it will need to accept licences originating in another member state which has used the possibility of extending their validity. This will help ensure the smooth functioning of the internal market and continued cross-border activities.

The **amendment to the port services regulation** will contribute to the financial sustainability of ship operators in the context of the pandemic by providing flexibility to the existing rule that requires member states to ensure that a port infrastructure charge is levied. The amendment will give

ports the possibility to waive, suspend, reduce or defer the charges for port users due between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2020.

The Council's vote on the two regulations was taken using a written procedure, which was concluded today. The European Parliament voted on 15 May 2020.

Both legal acts will enter into force the day after they are published in the EU Official Journal, which is expected to take place next week.

The legislative process is still ongoing for the other two proposals in the transport emergency package presented by the Commission on 29 April 2020, which concern aviation and the fourth railway package.