



Ms Roxana Mînzatu
European Commission's Executive Vice-
President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality
Jobs and Preparedness

By email

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Building an EU-wide network of safe and secure truck parking areas

Dear Executive Vice-President,

Allow us to first warmly thank you and your team for joining the representatives of IRU, ETF and ESPOrg in visiting several truck parking areas in Belgium on 4 September.

The visit was motivating and constructive, providing valuable insights into the challenges faced by drivers on the ground. We particularly appreciated your political engagement and the active involvement of your staff throughout the visit.

As road transport social partners and representatives of the truck parking community in the EU, we would like to follow up on two specific issues that were discussed extensively during our joint visit, in light of the factual background described below, and call for your support to address them.

The facts

According to the European Commission's sponsored study, the EU is currently facing a deficit of almost 390,000 safe and secure truck parking spots, a gap projected to reach 483,000 by 2040 if action is not taken.

Ensuring that new facilities meet the highest EU standards in terms of comfort and security is essential. Building a comprehensive EU-wide network of safe and secure parking areas will not only improve drivers' working and resting conditions, it will also help address the growing driver shortage that threatens EU supply chains, the wider economy, and mobility as a whole. The development of new and better safe and secure parking areas is a necessity in its own right and must not serve as a justification for changes in the existing regulations.

Issue 1: Overcoming reluctance from local and regional authorities

A major reason behind this shortfall is a lack of willingness to fund parking areas. In many cases, regional and local authorities are hesitant to support or permit truck parking projects. This reluctance is most visible where facilities are planned along highways crossing their territories. The trucks in need of rest areas often pass through them without delivering locally. The region and community therefore do not see how it would benefit them.

As a result, projects are frequently delayed or blocked at the planning, permitting or land access stages. What is missing is the recognition that safe and secure truck parking areas are not just local or regional facilities, but a service of general interest: they ensure safe working and resting conditions for drivers and safeguard the functioning of EU supply chains.

Real dialogue can easily address the concerns of local communities. Positive empirical evidence and precedent can be a powerful reassurance that parking areas can bring value to local communities and create a win-win situation for both local communities and drivers.

This is why we see a clear need for stronger EU leadership in urging Member States and regions to prioritise planning, unblock authorisation processes, and actively support the construction of new facilities and the upgrading of existing ones, particularly along the EU's most congested corridors.

Issue 2: Ensuring consistent EU co-funding

The second pillar of a robust multiannual EU strategy should be to guarantee consistent and predictable EU co-funding for the construction and upgrading of truck parking areas in the years ahead. This could be channelled through the Connecting Europe Facility, under the next Multiannual Financial Framework, and complemented by national co-funding as well as private investment. Only through such a combined and sustained financing effort will the EU be able to close the gap and deliver the quality infrastructure drivers urgently need.

Proposal for a task force with a view to spur further European Commission action

To help turn these objectives into a concrete action plan, we propose setting up an informal task force, composed of IRU, ETF and ESPORG representatives, together with relevant experts from DG EMPL and DG MOVE, under your overall coordination together with Commissioner Tzitzikostas.

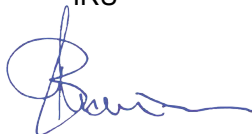
Such a group could, possibly by next year, develop an outline of a European Commission strategy and action plan aimed at:

- Working together on driver wellbeing matters
- Motivating Member States to plan, permit and develop safe and secure truck parking areas as a priority of general interest, for example, by setting up public-private partnership structures
- Removing regional and local permitting barriers and pushing for urban planning that allows easy architectural approval for safe and secure truck parking areas
- Setting the path towards a fully functional EU network of safe and secure truck parking areas by 2030

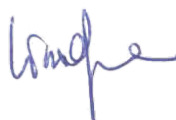
With once again our sincere gratitude for your engagement, we look forward to your support in advancing these objectives.

Yours sincerely,

Raluca Marian
General Delegate EU

IRU


Livia Spera
Secretary General

ETF


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