

Paolo Gentiloni  
Commissioner for Economy  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium

Stephen Quest  
Director General  
Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union  
Rue Joseph II 79  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium

Philip Kermode  
Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union  
European Commission  
Rue Joseph II 79  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium

Brussels, 25 March 2020

**Re: A call for a coordinated response between the European Commission and Member States to the COVID-19 crisis with regards to customs border management and flow of commercial goods**

Dear Commissioner Gentiloni,  
Dear Mr Quest,  
Dear Mr Kermode,

On behalf of the American Chamber of Commerce to the EU (AmCham EU), and in light of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, we would like to thank you for your support so far to ensure the continued flow of goods within Europe, in particular the Communication of 23 March (C(2020)1897). In addition to this important guidance, we believe your further intervention to coordinate measures with regards to customs facilitation in Member States to ensure a free flow of goods between EU Member States and to third countries would be helpful.

The supply chain and delivery services, as performed by our member companies, play a pivotal role in ensuring that time-critical shipments – whether of life-saving medical supplies, protective equipment, or spare parts for urgent repairs, including the critical supplies in addressing this global health priority and agricultural inputs for ongoing food security – are delivered in time to those who need them.

As such, operational continuity for road, rail, sea and air transport operations is essential to avoid a further negative impact on the economic activity of the EU's businesses and consumers, also where the transport of consumer goods from e-commerce activities serve as the only means of sales where retail stores have been ordered to close.

We furthermore call upon you to limit possible delays at the border as a result of reduced staffing both at customs and on the side of economic operators.

Our member companies will need to implement fast intermodal transport solutions to ensure that time-critical shipments reach their destinations, we therefore need to rely on flexible customs facilitation wherever possible.

To this end, we would welcome urgent measures and guidelines with regards to:

- Flexible transit arrangement including transit guarantees that would reduce the amounts to be guaranteed per the EU's New Computerised Transit System (NCTS), an extension to the 2/3-day window to discharge transit documentation and flexible cancellation options;
- Simplified customs entry at presentation of goods, reduced inspections and paperwork as well as postponed processing of full customs declarations and supplementary entries;
- Facilitation of customs warehousing and flexible solutions for blocked bonded goods, and an extension of the current 90-day limit on the temporary storage of goods; and
- An extension of the Single Transport Contract (STC) for road movements in light of current and potential air travel restrictions.

Acknowledging the need to strike the right balance between protecting public health and preserving the integrity of the EU Single Market and the openness of global supply chains, we eagerly await the European Commission's engagement and respectfully ask that you coordinate all possible measures needed to ensure effective customs facilitation and border management with Member States and third countries. Such coordination is necessary for supply chains to deliver essential goods in the current health crisis.

Our companies are available to you, should you need any further information. We would welcome the opportunity to schedule a conference call at your earliest convenience to discuss these matters in more detail with you.

Yours sincerely,



Walter Van der Meiren,  
Chair of the Customs and Trade Facilitation Committee  
AmCham EU

CC: Cabinet of European Commission President von der Leyen; Member States Customs Attachés