

UND ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE VISA RESTRICTIONS ON TURKISH TRUCK DRIVERS

DRIVER VISA PROBLEMS EXPLAINED TO THE SCHENGEN DELEGATION



Responding to an invitation by the Hungarian Consulate in Istanbul, on 16 September 2019, UND attended a meeting participated by esteemed representatives from Schengen member states to discuss the problems encountered by Turkish truck drivers regarding visa procedures and offered some concrete solutions.

UND SURVEY ON DRIVER VISAS

As part of the actions aimed at the elimination of problems experienced during visa processes, a survey was launched among UND member transport companies. Existing visa services have been evaluated by road transport company representatives and by their truck drivers.

VISIT TO THE HUNGARIAN CONSULATE IN ISTANBUL



As a follow-up of the visit in May 2019, to the Hungarian Embassy in Ankara, a UND delegation met with the Deputy Consulate General and Visa Consulate on 31 July 2019 at the Hungarian Consulate in Istanbul to discuss recent problems experienced during Schengen visa application processes.

During the discussion, the Hungarian consulate representatives informed that Hungarian Consulate does not require any invitations for Hungarian transit visas and CMR documents are required only for transport operations finalized in the past.

VISIT TO THE HUNGARIAN EMBASSY IN TURKEY



UND Delegation visited Mr. Deputy Mission Chief Mr. Ferenc Kékesi and the Visa Consulate of Hungary, Ms. Diána Jáger to discuss the issues related to the situation of road transport between two countries as well as professional driver visa problems.

VISIT TO THE AUSTRIAN CONSULATE IN ISTANBUL

A UND Delegation visited the Austrian Consulate General, Mr. Gerhard Lutz in his office in Istanbul in May 2019. During the meeting, problems encountered by transport companies concerning visas and transit transportation through Austria were on the agenda.

It was decided to bring together those road transport companies that do business to and transiting through Austria, with a promise of support in the facilitation of visa processes for such company drivers.



MEETING WITH THE GERMAN-TURKISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



UND Delegation visited the Member of the Board and Secretary-General, Dr. Thilo Pahl and discussed the problems experienced by Turkish road transporters along the route to Germany caused by transit restrictions imposed by certain EU member states en route and their impact on the trade between Turkey and Germany.

AHK confirmed the existence of such problems of transit and they accepted the need for improvement at the level of EU institutions to the benefit of Turkish and German stakeholders.

MEETINGS WITH THE TURKISH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



UND Delegation met with the staff of Directorate General for EU Affairs at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the situation of international road freight transporters operating to the EU with about transit restrictions as well as recent problems experienced by Turkish professional truck drivers that conduct international transport operations between Turkey and the EU during their Schengen visa applications.



Problems have recently focused on the new requirements launched by certain EU consulates or embassies for new documents, very short staying period visas that range between 7-30 days, rejection of visa cases, different requirements during applications in different cities and time-consuming visa issuance processes.

UND Delegation also shared the results of the recent visit paid to the EU Commission Directorates (DG MOVE, DG HOME, DG TRADE) on 12-13 December 2019 in Brussels within the framework of the latest action plan to remove discriminatory restrictions to transit operations conducted by Turkish transporters through certain EU member states.

AT THE TURKEY – BRITISH BUSINESS FORUM TRANSIT RESTRICTIONS AND SCHENGEN VISA PROBLEMS WERE DISCUSSED

The Turkish-British Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TBCCI) organized the UK-Turkey Business Forum in Istanbul in September, 2019.

During the Forum, mutual investment, trade and joint project opportunities were discussed between the two countries. Turkish Minister of Trade Mrs. Ruhsar Pekcan, TBCCI Chairman Mrs. Alderman Emma, Britain's Ambassador in Turkey Sir Dominick Chilcott and the Chairman of the Presidential Investment Office Mr. Arda Ermut participated as speakers.



UND Chairman of Executive Committee Mr. Alper Özel discussed the difficulties and obstacles faced by Turkish transporters who operated to the UK. The transit quotas applied by certain European Union countries and the problems experienced in the recent Schengen visas of professional drivers were on the agenda.

VISIT TO THE GERMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (IHK) IN BERLIN



UND visited the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry officials and explained that transit problems imposed by certain EU member states on Turkish transport operators that operate to Germany, cause significant economical damages for German companies involved in trade with Turkey and its region.

UND discussed that German exports cannot reach to Turkey and to the countries beyond Turkey because of transit problems and permit restrictions imposed upon Turkish trucks by certain countries en route. It was stated that the transportation of German goods to such countries is expected to increase in the coming years.

MEETING AT THE GERMAN MINISTRY OF ECONOMY IN BERLIN

UND Delegation met with the Head of Turkey Unit at the German Ministry of Economy. UND underlined that the facilitations for transit transport operations through the EU member states will provide significant profit for both Turkey and Germany, because there are many EU or German-originated companies active in Turkey. Obstacles to transit transportation within the EU may seem to have an adverse impact only on the Turkish economy but indeed they mainly damage the economy of Germany and most of the EU member states.

The value of Turkey's export goods compared to the value of German export goods, German goods are at least 3 times higher in value. Obstacles to the transportation of German exports to Turkey and to the countries beyond Turkey, have severe damages on the trade growth of Germany.

The German Ministry of Economy confirmed their awareness of the importance of the issue and stated that they work in cooperation with the Turkish ministries, also the subject is a hot issue on their agenda.



VISIT TO THE GERMAN INDUSTRIAL FEDERATION (BDI)

In October 2019, UND visited the German Industrial Federation and underlined that the transit restrictions imposed by certain EU member states on Turkish transporters carrying goods to/from the EU are detrimental for German companies involved in trade with Turkey and for the German economy as a whole.



UND also informed BDI that German transport operators are not willing to transport to Turkey and to countries beyond Turkey due to the distance, consequently German export goods cannot reach to Turkey and to the countries beyond Turkey, because of permit restrictions and transit problems experienced by Turkish transporters along the route from Germany to Turkey.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY UND TO TACKLE ILLEGAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROBLEM AT SERBIAN-CROATIAN BORDERS



UND delegation visited the Serbian Ministry of Interior Affairs, Border Administration, Ministry of Finance, Customs Administration, Customs System and Procedures, Transit and Border Procedures Administration in Zagreb. The agenda of the meetings included high levels of penalties imposed on Turkish international road transport companies in Croatia because of illegal immigrants found in trucks, mainly at the border gate Batrovci between Serbia and Croatia.

It was explained that Turkish drivers had difficulty in detecting illegal immigrants that enter their trucks secretly, despite all precautions or deterrents and they have been forced to pay penalties up to EUR 7.000.



UND cooperated with the Turkish Presidency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure to solve the problems of illegal immigrants and in June 2019, a new project was launched with the support of the Serbian Embassy.

Under the project, 10 Turkish police officers were assigned at the Embassy of Serbia and at all Serbian border gates, working on 7/24 basis.



UND also purchased two Co2 Measurement Devices and donated them to the Serbian authorities allowing them to efficiently check illegal immigrants before the trucks reach the Croatian border. In case illegal immigrants are detected through such controls, Turkish trucks are removed from such immigrants and the trucks can continue their way without any penalty.

UND also held several meetings with relevant officials in Serbia to solve the problem of illegal immigration to Serbia-Croatia, which threatened the lives of drivers, damaging our exports and causing high penalties.

UND met with the Serbian Association in Belgrade to discuss the latest status of the border crossings and to plan a road map. The Serbian Association's reports on the visits to the borders with Croatia and Hungary were consulted, further targets were set to accelerate crossings through the borders.

ON-SITE OBSERVATIONS AT SERBIAN BORDER GATES



In September 2019, UND Delegation visited Batrovci and Horgos Border Gates in Serbia and identified the problems experienced on site. The main reasons for the occurrence of illegal immigration cases Batrovcki Border Gate 10 km. are the location of the immigrant camp and insufficient security measures.

Between June-September 2019, 10 Turkish police officers served at the border gates of Batrovci, Röszke and Horgos 24/7 and gave support to Turkish companies and citizens during their border crossings.



By the help of two carbon dioxide devices donated to Serbian authorities, they are now able to control a large number of departing vehicles through donated devices, and in case of illegal immigrants they are able to remove the immigrant from vehicles without imposing any penalties.