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Discrimination, Exclusion and Environmental Harm: Why EU Lawmakers Need to Ban Freight Transport Restrictions to Save the Single Market

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Brussels, Belgium, 25th June 2020 - The Mobility Package 1 legislative proposal that is up for a vote in the European Parliament in July 2020. Initially, it was intended to improve the working conditions of the truck and small-van drivers in the EU. The European Commission also aimed at securing a smooth and non-discriminatory functioning of the Single Market.

However, over the past three years, the legislative procedure towards the current draft of the Mobility Package 1 was hijacked by the protectionist agenda of haulage and logistics businesses in Western Europe. Some national governments and Members of the European Parliament called for tighter freight cabotage and return-to-home provisions to shield Western European transport markets against the competition from other EU Member States. This rise of protectionist measures in EU transport markets vividly demonstrates the need to abolish current EU-imposed freight cabotage restrictions in defence of the Single Market.

'In the process towards a real, more inclusive Single Market, EU lawmakers must abstain from catering Western European companies vested commercial interests,' says Matthias Bauer.

For the sake of a greener, more inclusive and better functioning of the European Single Market, lawmakers need to renounce the new restrictions such as proposed cooling-off periods and return-to-home policies. Maintaining legal limitations on the freedom to provide transport services would increase tensions between countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe – economically, mentally and politically.

Freight cabotage restrictions and return-to-base policies not only increase the administrative burden for internationally operating haulage companies across the EU; they also substantially increase the number of empty trailers on European roads.

Industry assessments indicate that additional limitations on international freight transport services within the European Single Market would raise the prices of transporting goods in Western Europe. Estimates also suggest that the supplementary CO2 emissions would be substantial, undermining the EU's ambitious European Green Deal.

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