

**Agreed Minutes
of the Georgian – Latvian Joint Committee
Meeting on International Road Transport
Tbilisi, 28 - 29 September, 2023**

The following agenda was agreed by the delegations:

1. Exchange of information regarding the development of trade and road transport between Georgia and Latvia.
2. Transport of goods by road, including establishment of the road transport permit quota for 2023 and preliminary for 2024.
3. International passenger transport, including passenger rights in bus transport.
4. Exchange of views concerning further development of the ECMT quota system and implementation of the Quality Charter.
5. Miscellaneous.

The composition of both delegations is annexed to the Agreed Minutes.

1. Exchange of information regarding the development of trade and road transport between Georgia and Latvia

The two delegations exchanged statistical information concerning trade relations between the two countries and about the organization of the road transport sectors in each of them. The Latvian delegation presented information on passenger and goods transport by road in Latvia, as well as information on international trade between Georgia and Latvia.

The Latvian delegation noted that during the year 2022 export volume from Latvia to Georgia in terms of money exceeded 56 million EUR, and compared to the previous year it has risen by 59,4%, while import from Georgia has reached 91 million EUR thus increasing by 18,3%. Export volume expressed in tons reached 7489 tons and in comparison with 2021 increased by 15%, while import volume amounted to 5367 tons increased by 114,3%.

Total trade turnover expressed in EUR between both countries increased by 31,3%, totalling over 147 million EUR during 2022. While total trade turnover expressed in tons increased by 42,5%.

The main types of goods imported from Georgia include beverages, spirits, vinegar, hazelnuts, wood and articles of wood.

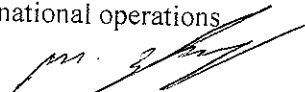
Export from Latvia to Georgia includes beverages, spirits, vinegar and pharmaceutical products.

The Georgian delegation highlighted that their data on the trade exchange volume bears considerable resemblance to the data presented by the Latvian side.

The Latvian delegation informed about the structure of their heavy goods vehicle fleet and noted that the number of licensed Latvian operators involved in international goods transport operations has dropped by 1,3% in the year 2023 compared to the previous year, reaching 4791 operators. The number of vehicles involved in international carriage of goods has reached 15,917 units. Additionally, the Latvian delegation noted the increase in the number of vehicles corresponding to EURO VI and EURO V standard amounting to 79% of the entire fleet involved in the international operations.

The Georgian delegation presented the information on the structure of the vehicle fleet and noted that in 2023 there are about 5899 companies involved in international goods transport. The number of vehicles involved in the international carriage of goods in 2023 is 11,550 units.

The Georgian delegation also underlined that the number of vehicles corresponding to EURO VI and EURO V standard amounting to 75% of the entire fleet involved in international operations



The Georgian delegation informed the Latvian delegation that the war in Ukraine had altered the geopolitical landscape of the region, resulting in a sharp increase in trade and road freight transportation through the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (Middle Corridor) from Asia to Georgia and thereafter to Europe, and vice versa. It is important to emphasize that Georgia is emerging as a regional trade and transportation transit hub.

Both sides signified their satisfaction with the positive development of trade between the two countries and expressed hope that the trade turnover and the number of international goods transport operations between Georgia and Latvia will continue an upward trend in the future.

2. Transport of goods by road, including establishment of the road transport permit quota for 2023 and preliminary for 2024

Both delegations noted that in the year 2023 four hundred fifty (450) universal permits valid for bilateral, transit and third country transport operations have been exchanged.

The delegations exchanged information on the usage of permits in the eight months period of the year 2023.

After discussions and taking into an account the positive development of trade between the two countries, as well as the underlying ambition of the two delegations to further carriage of goods by road between Georgia and Latvia, the delegations agreed:

- to establish the preliminary quota of universal permits valid for bilateral, transit and third country transport operations in amount of 500 permits for the year 2024.

The permits for 2024 shall be exchanged by 15 December 2023 via diplomatic channels.

All permits of the current year shall be valid till 31 January of the following year.

The delegations agreed that in case of necessity any of the Parties can request an additional number of permits and such requests will be examined in the spirit of goodwill.

On the request of the Latvian delegation, the Georgian side provided an explanation on peculiarities concerning the use of single-entry permits in cases when types of transport operations are being changed during the performance of a particular carriage thus requiring the use of two single-entry permits. The Latvian side noted that the universal permits are covering all three types of operations and as such should provide flexibility to choose combinations of types of carriage, e.g., a bilateral carriage can be followed by a third country operation and *vice versa*.

The Georgian delegation has reviewed the aforementioned proposal and has stated that the purpose of the universal permit is determined by its initial usage. It is valid for one of the following types of carriage, with or without goods:

1. Country of registration – contracting party – country of registration (bilateral carriage);
2. Transit (one-round journey);
3. Third country - contracting party - third country;
4. Third country - contracting party - country of registration;
5. Country of registration - contracting party - third country.

The type of carriage specified in paragraphs 1-5 must be declared upon entry into the territory of Georgia.

When carrying out carriage as specified in paragraphs 3-5, the type of carriage must be declared as "third country," and the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- For carriage as specified in paragraph 4, using one Georgian universal permit, it is possible to conduct carriage from a third country to Georgia and subsequently undertake a bilateral carriage from Georgia;

- For carriage as specified in paragraph 5, using one Georgian universal permit, it is possible to conduct bilateral carriage to Georgia and subsequently undertake carriage from Georgia to a third country.

In case of a change from the previously declared type of carriage upon leaving Georgia, a new universal permit is required.

The Georgian side noted, that if a single vehicle is carrying different loads simultaneously to/from multiple transit countries, bilateral countries, or third countries for international road freight transportation with various transport documents, the driver of the motor vehicle is obliged to submit, at the customs border of Georgia, one transit, bilateral, or international road freight transport permit for each transport operation to/from a third country, depending on the each type of transport operation.

The Georgian side informed the Latvian side that, if necessary, Latvian carriers could purchase a special permit in Georgia. This permit allows carriers registered in other countries to load goods within Georgia and transport them abroad. The aforementioned permit can be obtained from the branches of the Land Transport Agency (LEPL) located in the cities of Tbilisi, Poti, Batumi, and Kutaisi. The total fee for this special permit is 600 GEL.

3. International passenger transport, including passenger rights in bus transport

Both delegations noted that there are no regular bus lines between Georgia and Latvia.

It was noted that 10 permits for occasional non-liberalized passenger services have been exchanged in 2023 and it was agreed to exchange preliminary the same number for 2024.

The Georgian side informed that they are examining the possibility of joining the Interbus Agreement. It was noted that, at this stage, the process of examining this matter continues, and there are no concrete decisions regarding joining the aforementioned agreement.

The Latvian delegation shared that the Protocol to the Interbus Agreement regarding regular and special regular services has been ratified by the European Union. The Protocol to the Interbus Agreement also covers bus passenger rights as set out in Regulation No 181/2011 concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport.

The Latvian delegation informed that the competent authority for regular bus permits as well as occasional passenger transport operations by bus is Latvian Road Transport Administration, 30 Valņu Street, Riga, LV-1050, Latvia, e-mail: daiga.ancane@atd.lv, phone: +37167686493.

The Georgian delegation informed that the competent authority for regular bus permits as well as occasional passenger transport operations by bus is Road Transport Department of the LEPL - Land Transport Agency Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, 16 Vazha-Pshavela Ave, 0160, Tbilisi, Georgia, e-mail: VGiorgobiani@lta.gov.ge, phone: + 995 599 30 40 60

4. Exchange of views concerning further development of the ECMT quota system and implementation of the Quality Charter

The Georgian delegation noted that, in order to meet the high demand from carriers for the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) licenses, the LEPL - Land Transport Agency revised and enhanced the rules regarding the issuance of ECMT licences for transport undertakings in 2022.

According to statistics, within a year of implementing the new rules, the Agency observed a significant increase in the number of ecologically friendly vehicles (EURO VI/+) in the fleets of transport undertakings that use the ECMT licence for international transport operations. Additionally, there was a noticeable improvement in their financial sustainability. A detailed analysis of these undertakings' transport operations also indicated that, since 2022, they have minimized unladen journeys and diversified their transport operations geographically.

Herewith, as a result of the recent reform, carriers utilizing ECMT licences, have become substantially more sustainable in terms of finances and capital, as well as have met the criteria set by the Quality

Chapter. Therefore, the demand for ECMT licences is rapidly increasing, as the haulers are fully capable and able to provide road transportation services to/from wide range of countries.

Despite the aforementioned reform resulting in the hauler's compliance with the Quality Chapter and the increasing demand, the Georgian delegation underlines that the existing ECMT basic quota (120) is insufficient for Georgia, as it does not effectively meet the increased needs of the country's road transport sector for the required number of ECMT licences.

The two delegations discussed the possibilities of further development of the ECMT quota system, particularly matters regarding the prospect of increasing the ECMT basic quota for member countries, the geographical expansion of the quota, and the digitalization of ECMT licences. Both delegations emphasized their readiness to work together in order to facilitate substantial changes within the ECMT system. It was noted that after implementation of digitalized ECMT licence system the possibilities of digitalization of bilateral licences could be examined. Both delegations agreed to make any possible efforts in developing the ECMT Quota in the future.

5. Miscellaneous

The Latvian side proposed to discuss the issue of usage of electronic CMR consignment note and informed on the progress of work carried out within the framework of the UNECE GE.22 Group of experts on operationalization of the e-CMR with a view to a request for an extension of the mandate of the group that is going to be submitted to the SC.1 Working Party on Road Transport in October, 2023. The Georgian side expressed its support for fostering the work of the Group in order to fulfil its designated tasks.

Both delegations exchanged information on licensing systems and issuing permits in their countries.

The Latvian side informed that according to the European Union Road Transport Package provisions in Latvia the Community licenses are issued for a period of up to 10 years, but the validity of the certified copies of Community licenses is one year. A certified copy contains the registration number of the particular vehicle. A transport manager is allowed to manage the transport activities in not more than two undertakings with a total fleet of no more than 50 vehicles. The necessity of periodic training for transport managers is not specified. The Latvian delegation explained that the certified copies of the Community licenses are issued only for vehicles registered in Latvia.

The Georgian delegation informs the Latvian delegation, that the licensing system for transport undertakings in Georgia is undergoing reform. The relevant legislative package, which was developed in compliance with EU legislation, is already under consideration in the Parliament of Georgia.

The Latvian delegation provided the Georgian delegation with updated information on road charging in Latvia, including that the system is extended to goods vehicles with permissible total weight over 3.0 tons. The Latvian side noted that the vignette is electronic. It is possible purchasing of it by a fuel card, a credit card, by mobile phone or by internet. The carriers are able to purchase a day, a week, a month and a year vignettes. An electronic database is used for control of the vignette system. The vignettes are issued taking into consideration ecological standards of the vehicles, number of axles, etc. More detailed information is available at: www.lv vignette.eu.

The Georgian side informed that there is no road tolling system in their country but when performing transit operations by a loaded vehicle through the territory of Georgia a carrier is obliged to pay a fee in amount of 350 GEL which is charged on non-discriminatory basis.

The delegations exchanged information on competent authorities and bodies in the field of road transport in both countries.

The Latvian side pointed out that road transport control functions inside the country are executed by the Bureau of Traffic Supervision and Coordination of Traffic Safety Directorate of Main Directorate of State Police (address: 10B Ezermalas Street, Riga, LV-1009, phone: +371 67208143; email: sdp@vp.gov.lv).

The Georgian delegation informed that in Georgia road transport control, including control of maximum permissible weights and dimensions is performed by the patrol police and customs authorities at border crossing points.

It was noted that special authorizations for carriage of abnormal loads in Latvia are issued by the State joint – stock company “Latvian State Roads” (address: 7/9 Torna Street, Room 203, Riga, LV-1050; phone: +371 67036412; email: atlaujas@lvceli.lv).

The Georgian delegation informed that in Georgia when a carrier performs carriage of abnormal loads it should be escorted. Applications for such escorting service should be submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia in advance (address: Gulua Street 10, 0114, Georgia, Phone (+995 32) 241 11 58;

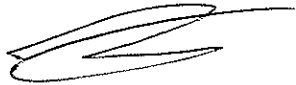
The meeting was held in a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

Both delegations emphasized the usefulness of the meeting.

The Latvian delegation invited the Georgian delegation to Latvia for the next Joint Committee meeting in Riga. The exact dates of the meeting will be additionally agreed upon through correspondence.

Done at Tbilisi, on 29 September, 2023, in two originals in the English language.

For the Latvian delegation



Annija Novikova

For the Georgian delegation



Levan Gamkrelidze