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From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on Frontiers / Mixed Committee (EU-Iceland/Norway and Switzerland/Liechtenstein)
Subject:	Entry Exit System: Professional drivers and the Entry-Exit System (EES)

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Following our discussion on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February about the entry into force of the EES and its impact on Third Country National truck drivers transporting goods to and within the Schengen area, the Presidency considers that more reflection is required on the lines to communicate, and the measures to be taken both in the short and the longer term.

**Professional drivers and the Entry-Exit System (EES) - state of play and way forward**

The Schengen Borders Code (SBC) authorises stays in Schengen for up to 90 days within 180 days. With the introduction of the Entry-Exit System (EES), overstays will be systematically detected, which is in line with its objective to increase security by ensuring better implementation of existing rules.

This improved control of an already existing Schengen rule causes serious concern, mostly, but not only for the Western Balkan Road haulage sector which is supported by their home countries. Their concern is that the full electronic EES registration would have detrimental consequences for this industry, as the duration of the stay 90/180 days will be systematically checked and registered. Western Balkans hauliers indicate that the competent authorities in the Member States have been

flexible applying the rules thus far and plead for finding a flexible solution to continue this practice. As part of their campaign hauliers organised a blockage of the EU external borders in January this year and further protest action is announced for April. EU and Western Balkans industries alike (in particular, the automotive sector) has also raised concerns about a severe risk of disruptions to production capabilities in Europe, both in terms of financial costs and of strategic production planning.

The matter was discussed at the Working Party on Frontiers and the Schengen Borders Code (SBC) Committee during 2025 and 2026 and with the Western Balkan States over the last weeks in the context of a technical working group facilitated by the European Commission. In those contexts, ideas were raised such as exemptions from EES registration or stopping the automatic calculator for professional drivers. These proposals would all require changes to the SBC and other legislation. They are therefore not feasible as short-term solution, given the time needed for the ordinary EU legislative procedure.

Given the full application of the EES as of 10 April, businesses both in the Western Balkans and EU need clarity now to be able to adapt their operations. It is important to agree on a consistent line to communicate on that matter, which may include:

- The EES will be implemented as planned and there will be no regulatory changes at EU level on that matter in the next months.
- Professional drivers and their companies must adapt to the fact of systematic registration in the EES as of 10 April and a limited duration of stay in the Schengen area.
- In the same way, economic operators within and outside the EU will have to accept EES as a new reality to which business processes will have to be adapted. Companies may need to change their production planning and workflows.
- According to the information provided by the Commission on the EES website, there is leeway for third country professional drivers ([FAQs about EES - EES](#)). Member States can also consider issuing long-stay visa or residence permits if appropriate, or in some cases treat certain professional drivers as cross-border workers.
- Protests leading to border closures are harmful and will not improve the situation. We plead on all to avoid unhelpful escalation.

- The Visa Strategy published on 29 January 2026 includes possible longer-term option (short stay permits) and is discussed in the Visa Working Party.

At the same time, without committing to a solution, but considering the significant impact of the limitations the EES poses to professional drivers from third countries, the Presidency invites the delegations' views on the questions below.

#### Questions for discussion

1. Do you envisage any facilitations for professional drivers within the current legal framework (for instance creating possibilities for professional drivers to apply for long-stay visas or residence permits)?
2. Do you consider that any legislative or other measures are necessary to address the issue of the limited stay of professional drivers within the Schengen territory?