



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Cabinet of Commissioner Adina Vălean  
**Head of Cabinet**

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Mr Florêncio PLACIDO DE ALMEIDA  
Vice-president of TEA

Mr Miguel Angel LEAL CASADO  
President of TEA

Mr Lorenzo BITTARELLI  
Vice- president of TEA

Mr Luciano STELLA  
Secretary General TEA

Dear Sirs,

I would like to thank you for your letter in which you draw our attention to the role of the taxi sector as a service of general economic interest during the Coronavirus crisis. We take due note of your recommendations.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on our lives and the economy, including the transport sector and notably the passenger transport sector. With travel bans and citizens obliged or encouraged to refrain from all but essential travel, aviation, rail, buses, public and local transport have faced unprecedented difficulties.

In your letter, you explain how the taxi sector, despite great difficulties, has maintained its role as a service of general economic interest throughout the past months of the Coronavirus crisis. You highlight the challenges that self-employed drivers and small companies – the backbone of the taxi sector in the EU – have been facing. You underline how this crisis has proven the role of taxis as services of general economic interest, providing continued availability of safe transport services at a fair price. In your letter, you stress that the taxi industry has suffered from unfair competition by international ride-hailing platforms. You fear that a more liberalised market would negatively impact service quality and consumer protection.

First of all, I very much welcome the efforts made by your sector in keeping drivers and passengers safe, whilst ensuring availability of transport services. The Communication of the Commission of 13 May 2020, which includes guidelines on the progressive

restoration of transport services and connectivity following the COVID-19 crisis, recognises the role of your sector in the supply of transport services. The Communication states that taxi and Private Hire Vehicles (PHV) services should continue to operate and it includes specific hygiene and risk mitigating recommendations.

The Commission is aware that, in many Member States, taxis and PHVs are subject to different sets of rights and obligations. The Commission shares your view that taxis and PHV's need a level playing field. Such a level playing field should benefit drivers, operators as well as citizens and the general public alike.

As you know, in September 2019, the Commission held a workshop on local passenger transport on demand with stakeholders of the sector, such as ride-hailing platforms, taxis and PHVs, in which you participated. The workshop provided stakeholders the opportunity to exchange experiences and challenges in view of the different approaches taken by legislators across Member States. A second workshop is currently being planned with relevant public authorities. These workshops will contribute to enable the Commission to assess if action at EU level in the taxi and ride-hailing sector is appropriate. Our ultimate aim is fair competition for all market players, reaping the benefits of modern digital technologies, and contributing to the European Green Deal and the goal of decarbonising transport.

In light of the current Covid-19 crisis, the European Commission is fully committed to restoring safe and sustainable mobility for our citizens, supporting businesses and Member States in mitigating the effects of the crisis, and addressing all concerns as quickly as possible.

Yours faithfully,

(e-signed)

Walter GOETZ