

30/03/2020

**ASECAP ALERTS OF THE DRAMATIC EFFECT OF THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN
AND URGES THE EC TO TAKE FURTHER ACTIONS**

The Covid-19 outbreak is a severe public health emergency for citizens and societies and a major shock to the global and EU economies which needs extraordinary and coordinate measures from European institutions and national governments.

ASECAP and its members fully support the efforts made by the European Commission and Member States and are entirely committed to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic to protect our clients and our staff (48,000 people).

At the same time, and beside the complexity of the current situation, toll road concessionaires work hard to keep their motorways (near 87,000 km), in operation given that their facilities, mostly located in the TEN-T core network, provide critical connections by linking economic centers and connecting major ports and airports. They are essential to guarantee the provision of goods and services in this critical situation of lockdown.

It is of utmost importance that common measures could be taken to secure the whole ecosystem chain comprising highway operators and their partners: service areas companies assuring food, beverage and fuel distribution, EETS providers, work construction companies which represent altogether around 200,000 persons.

Nevertheless, ASECAP wants to alert of the dramatic effect of the lockdown measures in the normal operation of their motorways, where traffics are dramatically falling (in some cases by 80-85%) and threatening the economic and financial viability of many toll motorway concessionaires. The plummeting of revenues may shortly hamper concessions to face their obligations with financial entities, providers and employees.

Thus, urgent measures must be adopted.

To that extend, and to boost the implementation of specific measures by national governments which must be fully compliant with the EC Communication “Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak”, ASECAP warmly requests the European Commission to publicly declare the Covid-19 pandemic as a case of “force majeure”. Such announcement will ease national governments to adopt two basic measures: i) temporary financial supporting aids to guarantee the continuity of the companies during the lockout and ii) the essential rebalance of affected toll concession contracts once this crisis will come to an end. Highway concessionaires are long-term investors in public infrastructures and services. Economic balance of concession contracts will strongly contribute to invest for economic recovery in Europe.

In addition, ASECAP also requires the European Commission to keep guaranteeing the national as well as cross-border traffic of heavy goods vehicles in order to ensure functioning of the economy and the fluid circulation of basic goods and at the same time ensures the continuity of toll collection, which is crucial for safe operation of motorways. Fluidity of traffic can be achieved by promoting, for instance, organization of convoys, use of electronic toll collection systems etc.

