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Red tape on Russian border gives losses for transport industry

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) believes international transport companies lose up to 100 mln USD per year because of bureaucratic procedures on the Russian border. Head of the Russian Customs Service, Andrey Belyaninov, says however that "no changes" are planned for the border procedures.

The ILO believes slow visa procedures and corrupt border officials result in major losses of profit for the transport companies. The UN organisation says especially slow visa procedures are a major problem. Head of the Russian Association of Road Transporters, Yuri Sukhin, now proposes to give the transport industry access to special passports similar to sailors, something which will facilitate their travelling across the border.

Mr. Sukhin says to Kommersant that Russian authorities have to "stop treating professional drivers as tourists". -The transport industry will continue to have huge losses until Russia in a basic way changes that way of working at the border points, he adds. He believes the transporters lose an estimated 100 mln EUR per year because of the bureaucracy.

Cross-border car and truck traffic across the Russian border has boomed almost 1,500 percent over the last 15 years.

Representatives of Russian border authorities are however reluctant to take on the state of affairs on the border points. Head of public affairs at the Federal Security Service, Vadim Shibaev, says the reason for the inefficiency is a lack of facilities on the border points. -The cross-border traffic has increased 100-fold, while many of the border points are constructed in Soviet times. Although in charge of national border control, he maintains that the FSB is not responsible for the construction of new border stations,

BarentsObserver.com said (based on information from Kommersant, 26 October 2006).

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