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News from Brussels

JOINT STATEMENT: TRANSPORT KEEPS US GOING FORWARD



CLECAT together with 31 other organisations have called on Member States and the European Commission to ensure that the

transport sector receives adequate consideration in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans.

On the 9th of February, the European Parliament endorsed the agreement on the Proposal for a Regulation establishing a Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). With a budget of EUR 672.5 billion, the RRF is the EU's main instrument to recover from the crisis caused by COVID-19.

While being hit hard by the pandemic and the various restrictive measures, the transport sector has demonstrated its crucial role in the supply of goods and movement of people and has thus proven its indispensability for a functioning European Union. The organisations

- Emphasize that the transport and logistics sectors are critical for providing EU citizens with the goods and the mobility that are essential for their health and well-being and will be major enablers to a sustainable and resilient recovery of Europe's economy.
- Reiterate that the European Green Deal calls for a 90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport, which requires substantial investments in transport infrastructures and fleets.
- Stress that the objectives of the Green Deal for Europe to become a climate-neutral economy by 2050, can only be obtained by increasing the sustainability of the transport sector; note that the budget of the Connecting Europe Facility II is not sufficient to enable the necessary transformation.
- Call on the European Commission to evaluate the prominence of economically and socially sustainable transport measures in their assessment of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans.

The full press release is available [here](#).

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON REVISED GUIDELINES FOR TEN-T

The European Commission has launched the [public consultation](#) on the revised guidelines for the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), which will be open until 5 May 2021.

The aim of the EU policy on transport infrastructure is to facilitate transport across Europe and reduce regional, economic and social disparities by developing interconnected infrastructure for air, road, rail and shipping – i.e., the trans-European transport network (TEN-T). The TEN-T Policy is governed by [Regulation 1315/2013](#), which sets guidelines for national and EU investment in transport infrastructure, as well as targeted funding under the Connecting Europe Facility and other relevant EU schemes.

SAVE THE DATE: ELP EVENT ON ALTERNATIVE FUELS



European Logistics Platform

The European Logistics Platform will organise a webinar on the 8th of March entitled 'A race against time: The significant role of alternative fuels infrastructure'. In the light of the upcoming review of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive (AFID) and its instrumental role in reaching the EU's 2030 decarbonisation objectives, the members of the ELP will demonstrate what role cleaner

fuels play in their business and what obstacles need to be removed in order to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is in place in line with efforts to reduce emissions in the transport sector.

The webinar will provide the opportunity to discuss with policy makers and stakeholders the necessary requirements to support the uptake of alternative fuels and how to accelerate the deployment of the respective infrastructure across the EU.

For more information, please visit the [ELP Website](#).

Road

LEGAL OPINION FINDS TRUCK DRIVING BAN IN TYROL ILLEGAL

A legal opinion of the University of Innsbruck considers the sectoral truck driving ban in Tyrol disproportionate and thus in violation of EU law, as reported by the Bolzano Chamber of Commerce on 9 February. The legal opinion prepared by European law expert Peter Hilpold will be presented in Germany and the European Commission.

In order to check the conformity of the new sectoral driving ban, Prof Dr Peter Hilpold reviewed the ban for its suitability, necessity and appropriateness. In 2011, the European Court of Justice classified the sectoral driving ban to be in violation of EU law but allowed exceptions for regional traffic. However, Tyrol has extended these exemptions to long-distance transport with source or destination in the Tyrol. The opinion notes that the inclusion of long-distance transport in this exemption



contradicts the entire logic of the exemption for regional transport and is thus also untenable under EU law.

The opinion also notes that the air quality data largely meets the EU requirements. Therefore, the Chamber of Commerce notes that the improvements in air quality that can be achieved in this way are disproportionate to the impairment of the free movement of goods.

Source: [Bolzano Chamber of Commerce](#)

Maritime

NO END IN SIGHT TO EX-CHINA OCEAN FREIGHT CHALLENGES

In a story in today's Lloyds Loading List Will Waters writes that shortages of ocean freight capacity and equipment, along with high spot rates, look set to continue well beyond the lunar New Year holiday period, some logistics experts believe, although there may be some easing of the current critical issues.

Whereas the annual two-week holiday period around Chinese New Year (CNY) usually pauses most manufacturing in China and the logistics that supports it, this year many factories are remaining open in an effort to catch up with backlogs of orders, while requests to employees not to travel home this year to avoid spreading Covid-19 have further complicated the logistics picture.



Hong Kong-based Akhil Nair, VP for global carrier management and ocean strategy at freight forwarding and supply chain specialist SEKO Logistics, said that in anticipation of potential instructions not to travel home for the holiday period, or domestic travel becoming completely locked down, many road freight drivers in China had left early to travel home ahead of the holidays, adding to existing shortfalls of container hauliers. One positive is that carriers are blanking far fewer sailings this year than during a normal CNY holiday

season - which he estimated at around 8% of capacity this year compared with around 20% in most previous years. He noted that most of the blankings that are taking place are because the ships are not where they should be, with carrier fleets continuing to be effectively 100% deployed.

But the market was facing very different demographics this year, including lots of Chinese factories not going to close this year in order to clear backlogs in manufacturing. In northern China, he highlighted a shortage of infrastructure to get orders from these factories to ports, leading to factories running out of space to store cargo, while also facing backlogs of orders. And the additional requirements for coronavirus testing, for example as drivers move from one province to another, was also adding to driver scarcity challenges.

The full story is available [here](#)



Brexit

PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE PROVISIONAL APPLICATION OF THE TCA

The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a [Council Decision](#) regarding the extension until 30 April 2021 of the provisional application of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) and the Agreement concerning security procedures for exchanging and protecting classified information.

The TCA foresees its time-limited provisional application until end of February, unless a later date is agreed by the Parties. This is a technical extension to allow the time needed for the completion of the legal-linguistic revision of the Agreement in all 24 languages for its scrutiny by the European Parliament and the Council. In order to change the end date of the provisional application, a decision needs to be taken jointly in the EU-UK Partnership Council, the governance body established by the TCA.

Notwithstanding the proposal of the Commission, MEPs agreed to continue their work according to the previously agreed timeframe. The responsible Foreign Affairs and International Trade committees are set to approve their recommendation in the week of 15 February, after which the full House is set to vote on 23 February before the provisional application of the EU-UK TCA lapses.

On 11 February, the co-chairs of the EU-UK Joint Committee on the Withdrawal Agreement – European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič and the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove – [met](#) to prepare the upcoming Joint Committee on the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland and the outstanding issues. They reiterated their full commitment to the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement, and to the proper implementation of the Protocol and agreed to spare no effort to implement the mutually agreed solutions. It was further agreed to intensify the work on the Protocol in order to address all outstanding issues and continue the joint engagement by the UK and the EU with business groups and civic society in Northern Ireland.

NEW UK GRANTS FOR SME'S

The UK Government launched a new wave of financial support to help small and medium-sized businesses that import or export from/to the EU. Businesses can use the grant for training on how to complete customs declarations; how to manage customs processes and use customs software and systems; and specific import and export related aspects including VAT, excise and rules of origin. It can be used to help you get professional advice so your business can meet its customs, excise, import VAT or safety and security declaration requirements.

To be able to apply for the grant, businesses must [be established in the UK](#); have been established in the UK for at least 12 months before submitting the application, or currently hold Authorised Economic Operator status; not have previously failed to meet its tax or customs obligations; have no more than 500 employees; have no more than £100 million turnover; and import or export goods between Great Britain and the EU, or move goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Applications for the SME Brexit Support Fund will open soon [here](#).



Air

PARLIAMENT ADOPTS SLOT RELIEF EXTENSION



To support the transport sector during the pandemic, the European Parliament revamped rules for the use of airport slots to prevent ghost flights and extended the validity of some licences.

On 11 February, the European Parliament's plenary adopted its [text on the extension of the slot relief](#) measures, designed to prevent ghost flights, with 683 votes in favour, 3 against, 4 abstentions.

In March 2020, the 80/20 'use it or lose it' rule for slots in air transport had been temporarily suspended to stop airlines from operating empty flights during the pandemic for the sole purpose of keeping their planned take-off and landing slots in the next season (ghost flights). The exemption which was extended already once in late 2020 ends on 27 March 2021.

According to the adopted text by the European Parliament's plenary, airlines will have to use 50% of their planned take-off and landing slots for the 2021 summer season (instead of the 80% required before the pandemic) in order to keep them in the following season. In addition, the European Commission can also extend the new rules to two further seasons in the future, and adjust the minimum utilisation rate to between 30% and 70%. This shall enable it to swiftly react to changing air traffic levels during the pandemic.

Parliament and Council consulted each other informally before the vote. With the Parliament having given its 'green light', the Council has to approve the rules, so they can enter into force after publication in the Official Journal of the EU.

Source: [European Parliament](#)

Rail

POLISH INDUSTRY QUERIES INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES INCREASE

The Polish infrastructure manager PKP has announced an increase of infrastructure charges by 2.3% as of next year. The increase comes as a surprise to the industry, especially considering the ongoing crisis, as well as the European Union's calls for waiving or reducing track access charges.

The proposal is under revision by the Polish Railway Transport Office. The rail freight sector feels disappointed and frustrated by the decision, which they argue is unjustified. Following the initial proposal, the Railway Business Forum for Poland sent an objection letter to the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure.

Source: [Railfreight](#)



Forthcoming Events

CLECAT MEETINGS

CLECAT Sustainable Logistics Institute

17 March 2021, Online

CLECAT Board Meeting

17 March 2021, Online

CLECAT Air Logistics Institute

8 June 2021, Online

CLECAT Security Institute

8 June 2021, Online

EU MEETINGS

Council of the European Union

Transport Council

3 June 2021, Luxembourg

Environment Council

18 March 2021, Brussels

21 June 2021, Luxembourg

European Parliament

European Parliament Transport Committee

24-25 February 2021, Brussels

European Parliament Plenary

8-11 March 2021, Brussels

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