CLECAT
european association for forwarding, transport, logistics and customs services

NEWSLETTER

Issue 45

21 December 2020

Table of content

CLECAT's Season's Wishes

We hope that you enjoy a well-deserved, peaceful time with family over the coming days!

Many of our members will continue to work over the end of the year period to ensure that goods keep moving and to ensure a safe and secure supply chain of the COVID-19 vaccines. Also, the transition to

Brexit keeps many businesses busy and operational. As of 1 January 2021, businesses that conduct trade between the EU and the UK will need to deal with border controls, thereby ensuring they submit the right formalities and information to border authorities in order to gain clearance for their goods at the border. The continuing hope for a deal, which would ultimately be the most wanted outcome, does not change this situation; customs and border checks will come into place on 1 January 2021.

Over the last year, European freight forwarders, logistics service providers and customs agents have proven essential in ensuring that transport did not come to a halt and ensured the continuity of supply chains, also through new solutions. Furthermore, our members proved flexible, resilient and agile in their ongoing preparations for Brexit.

Over 2020, the European Commission outlined new ambitions for Europe, not the least with respect to the European Green Deal, the Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility and the recovery strategies to enhance Europe's growth and resilience at global level. CLECAT and its members subscribe to these ambitions and look forward to discussing the ambitions and tools for a European transport system that is smart, flexible and agile towards the needs of European business and citizens.

Brussels News

COUNCIL POSITION ON THE EUROVIGNETTE DIRECTIVE REVISION

On 18 December, the Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Member States (COREPER) adopted the Council position on the Eurovignette Directive revision, formalising the compromise reached at the informal video-conference of the EU Transport Ministers on 8 December 2020. The adopted text can be found here.

According to the Council position, Member States will retain the possibility to choose their preferred charging model. As EU countries differ in their geography, population density and road networks and in terms of the charging systems they already have in place, time-based charging will be maintained as a cost-effective alternative to distance-based charging.

The scope of the rules will be extended from heavy-goods vehicles only to those other vehicles for which Member States may wish to apply charges. Countries will have the possibility to apply tolls and user charges for each type of vehicle independently of each other. In addition, Member States may provide for reduced toll rates or user charges or exempt certain vehicles from the obligation to pay tolls or user charges under specific conditions. For instance, this applies to vehicles between 3,5t and 7,5t, used for delivering goods, produced on a craft basis, or related equipment and machinery.

The main change compared to the current system will be the introduction of a new EU-wide tool for varying infrastructure and user charges according to heavy-duty vehicle CO2 emissions. The variation will be based on the existing CO2 standards for trucks. Initially, the scheme will only apply to the largest trucks, but it can gradually be extended to other types of heavy-duty vehicles and regularly adapted to technological progress. To incentivise the purchase of 'best-in-class' vehicles, Member States will be able to give preferential treatment to zero-emission vehicles.

The main principles for earmarking road charge revenue remain unchanged. In general, Member States should earmark revenue generated by infrastructure and external cost charges for projects in the transport sector, in particular in support of the TEN-T Network. With regard to revenue generated by mark-ups, transport-related earmarking remains obligatory. The rules will also allow Member States to apply higher mark-up (up to 50%) to the infrastructure charge levied on specific highly congested road sections, given that all affected Member States agree.

CLECAT has welcomed the Council compromise due to investment incentives for a market uptake of new technologies and more fuel-efficient trucks, but also highlighted some of the remaining concerns, in particular with regards to the risk of double charging and a fair level playing field between road infrastructure users, without discriminating against road freight transport.

CLECAT has encouraged the incoming Portuguese Presidency to start the trilogue negotiations with the European Parliament (EP) and the Commission as soon as possible. Whereas a number of differences will have to be resolved during the trilogues, the new provision of toll differentiation according to CO2 emissions is expected to convince the Members of the EP and possibly pave way for a compromise with the Council.

CLECAT CALLS FOR OMNIBUS REGULATION REVISION

In view of the ongoing spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the freight forwarding, transport and logistics sector in the EU has been facing severe issues with renewing certain professional competence and periodical training certificates of drivers, as the related administrative procedures have been put to a halt or heavily interrupted under the emergency crisis circumstances across the EU.

CLECAT has therefore sent a letter to DG MOVE asking to revise the Omnibus Regulation 2020/698 as a matter of urgency to allow the EU Member States to extend the validity of or to introduce waivers from certain driver's license requirements and related documentation. This should allow for more flexibility in dealing quickly with the challenges of the pandemic and preventing instances in which fines are imposed for expired driving licenses and certificates, regardless of the fact that it was impossible to renew them.

In particular, CLECAT calls for an extension of the validity of Community driving licences, driver cards and the certificates of professional qualification (alternatively, community code 95, entered on a driving licence), which confirm the driver's professional qualifications and permits for cargo transportation. It is also important to distinguish those licence details that are subject to administrative offenses (code 95) and those that are prosecuted under criminal law (driving without a valid license). It needs to be either guaranteed that drivers can prolong their licence or that they are issued a provisional document, which confirms an attempt to prolong it.

CLECAT has therefore encouraged the European Commission to prioritise the revision of the Omnibus Regulation 2020/698, as part of the broader contingency plan for transport, and put forward a proposal as soon as possible to ensure the flow of essential goods across the EU borders.

Brexit

EP ADOPTS CONTINGENCY MEASURES FOR A 'NO-DEAL' BREXIT

Following the endorsement by the Member States' ambassadors in the Council on 16 December, the European Parliament adopted on 18 December the measures to ensure basic road and air connections in case no agreement is reached on EU-UK future relations before the transition period comes to an end. These contingency measures, including basic air and road connectivity, shall mitigate some of the significant disruptions that will occur on 1 January in case a deal with the UK is not in place.

On basic *air connectivity*, the proposed regulation shall ensure the provision of certain air services between the UK and the EU for 6 months, provided the UK ensures the same. This includes rights for UK and EU air carriers to continue to fly over and make technical stops on EU territory, as well as serve direct routes to the EU. A limited number of pandemic-related cargo flights will also be allowed.

As regards basic *road connectivity*, the proposed regulation covers basic connectivity with regard to both road freight and road passenger transport for 6 months, provided the UK assures the same to EU hauliers. This will allow carriage of goods as well as coach and bus services coming to Europe and going to the UK to continue.

All temporary rules have to be adopted by the Council. They will enter into force after publication in the EU Official Journal and become applicable if a similar set of measures is adopted by the UK.

Source: European Parliament

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT

On 17 December, the EU-UK Joint Committee endorsed all formal decisions and other practical solutions related to the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement. The Withdrawal Agreement, and the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland in particular, will now be implemented on 1 January 2021.

Concerning the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, the Joint Committee adopter four decisions: a decision on the practical arrangements for Union presence in Northern Ireland, a decision on goods "not at risk" of entering the EU's Single Market, a decision on the exemption of agricultural and fish subsidies from State aid rules, and a decision to correct some errors and omissions in Annex 2 of the Protocol.

The EU and the UK also made a series of unilateral declarations to ensure an orderly, consensual approach to the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. Those cover a number of areas, including Border Control Posts specifically for checks on animals, plants and derived products, export declarations, the supply of medicines, the supply of chilled meats, and other food products to supermarkets, and a clarification on the application of State aid rules under the terms of the Protocol.

Additionally, the EU and the UK agreed on the practical working arrangements for EU representatives that will guarantee they will have the necessary capabilities to ensure that the UK authorities correctly implement the Protocol in Northern Ireland, thereby protecting the integrity of the EU Single Market.

In practice, this means that these tasks will take place at all places where goods and animals enter or exit Northern Ireland through ports or airports. The UK has agreed to provide adequate equipment and facilities, as well as continuous, real-time access to their relevant IT systems and databases, both on the ground and remotely, to enable the effective exercise of the EU's rights under the Protocol.

More information on the implementation measures adopted by the Joint Committee you will find here.

Source: European Commission

Maritime

NEW QUARTERLY REVIEW GIVES SHIPPERS' VERDICT ON CONTAINER SHIPPING MARKET

Importers and exporters around the world are experiencing rising container shipping rates on most routes, despite the costs of vessel operation falling, due to lower fuel costs and better utilisation of capacity. Available capacity continues to lag growth in demand as global trade recovers from the Covid-19 induced shocks of the first half of 2020.

These are the headline conclusions of a new periodic report on the container shipping market produced by logistics research consultancy MDS Transmodal (MDST) and the Global Shippers Forum (GSF) that represents cargo owners' interests world-wide. The Container Shipping Market Quarterly Review will be produced every three months and will report, interpret and comment on trends and developments in the container shipping market as experienced and understood by shippers – the importers and exporting businesses that own the cargo carried and contract with container shipping lines for the transport of their containerised goods.

The review collates and reports outputs from the MDST Container Business Modal and other tools that are relied upon by governments and international agencies around the world. Working with GSF, MDST has generated eight new indicators showing how the market is performing in terns that are relevant and applicable to shippers as users and customers of these services. All data is derived from publicly available sources, but MDST and GSF believe this to be the first time they have been used to provide a 'customer' perspective on container shipping developments.

The GSF-MDST findings for Q3 2020 are summarised as follows:

- **Trade volumes**: global trade levels recovered strongly in Q3 2020 but remained below 2019 levels for the quarter overall, with container shipping demand weaker than a year ago.
- **Shipping capacity**: sharp increase was recorder in shipping capacity deployed during Q3 as production and consumption resumed but lagged overall growth in demand. Historically high levels of utilisation of deployed capacity were achieved in Q3.
- **Carrier costs & revenues**: unit operating costs continued to decline in Q3 due to lower fuel prices and higher utilisation of capacity. Unit revenues rose sharply from better capacity utilisation and increased volumes. Interestingly, freight ate increases appear not to be driven by increases in unit operating costs.
- **Market competitiveness**: the top ten shipping lines accounted for 90% of deep-sea container movements in Q3.

- **Port connectivity**: many ports have seen service frequency and connections reinstated as more services have resumed, with global connectivity for imports and exports being restored.
- **Service performance**: service predictability for shippers declined at many ports as vessels resumed intermediate calls at congested ports, delaying service arrivals and departures beyond their expected times.
- **Carbon emissions**: CO_2 emissions per TEU have remained broadly flat since 2016, awaiting new global measures to be adopted by IMO from 2023. Notedly, this indicator can be used to report on the contribution of container shipping to their overall carbon footprint.

The GSF-MDST Container Shipping Market Quarterly Review for Q3 2020 can be downloaded here.

RECORD-LOW GLOBAL SCHEDULE RELIABILITY OF LINER SHIPPING

On 17 December, Copenhagen-based maritime analyst Sea-Intelligence released its Global Liner Performance Report, with schedule reliability figures up to and including November 2020. The report found that average global carrier schedule reliability across 34 trade lines dropped to just 50.1% last month, which means that for the fourth consecutive month global schedule reliability has been the lowest across all months since Sea-Intelligence introduced the reliability benchmark in 2011. Compared to November 2019, schedule reliability is -29.8 percentage points lower. In November 2018 and 2019, carrier services were far more reliable, averaging 75.5% and 80% reliability, respectively.

There is also a similar trend with the average delay for LATE vessel arrivals, with consecutive month-on-month increases recorded for the past three months, amounting to 5.10 days in November. The 2020 figure for the average delay for LATE vessel arrivals has been the highest overall in each month since April 2020, according to Sea-Intelligence.

In November 2020, Hamburg Süd was the most reliable carrier with 61.5% schedule reliability. Rounding out the top five were Maersk Line (56.2%), CMA CGM (53.7%), Wan Hai (51.9%) and MSC (50.9%). Only COSCO and OOCL recorded a month-on-month improvement in schedule reliability, whereas none of the carriers recorded a year-on-year improvement in schedule reliability, with Hamburg Süd recording the smallest decline of a staggering -27.0 percentage points.

This slump in schedule reliability coincided with the carriers' introduction of capacity on the major trade lanes above and beyond. With news of widespread port congestion, and with carriers not letting off capacity-wise (especially on the major trades) until at least Chinese New Year, there might not be improvements in schedule reliability until the Q2 in 2021, Sea-Intelligence forecasted.

Source: Sea-Intelligence

Air

EC PUBLISHES NEW SLOT RELIEF PROPOSAL AS OF SUMMER 2021

On 16 December, the European Commission adopted its proposal for the revised EU Slots Regulation, taking into account the need to provide relief from the use-it-or-lose-it rule in view the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The proposal, which shall apply as of the Summer Season 2021, does not foresee to grant a full waiver as is currently the case, but instead reduces the use-it-or-lose-it rule from 80/20 to

40/60, meaning that operators will have to use 40% of the slots allocated in order to retain their allocated slots in the following year.

The proposal also introduces a number of conditions aimed at ensuring airport capacity is used efficiently and without harming competition during the COVID-19 recovery period. These include:

- Slot series newly allocated to an air carrier for the first time, i.e. slot series to which the air carrier is not entitled as a result of having obtained grandfather rights, should not be covered by the relief. Instead, the normal 80/20 rule applies.
- The normal 80/20 use-it-or-lose-it rule should also continue to apply in the event of slot exchanges, where the exchange is accompanied by any financial or other compensation. By contrast, exchanges without financial or other compensation, carried out to improve timings, for example, would not stand in the way of the relief being applied to the slots concerned.
- The proposal includes a deadline of three weeks before the scheduled date of operations for air carriers to return unwanted slots to the coordinator if they are to benefit from the relief.

The proposed amendment is planned to apply as of the Summer Season 2021, with the possibility for the Commission to extend the relief by delegated act until the Winter Season 2024/2025. This also entails the possibility for the Commission to further adjust the rate of slot utilisation based on a number of indicators, including actual and forecast air traffic data, load factors and fleet utilisation.

EASA GUIDANCE ON USE OF DRY ICE IN VACCINE TRANSPORTATION

On 17 December, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) published guidance for the safe air transport of vaccines cooled by dry ice, assisting the European aviation industry with the challenge of distributing COVID-19 vaccines quickly, efficiently and safely. The purpose of the guideline is to provide guidance and recommendations to national competent authorities (NCAs) and operators for the transport of dry ice in excess of that already permitted in the operators' operations manual or other applicable manuals or documents in order to reduce the introduction of additional risks (safety and health) to the aircraft systems and its occupants.

Dry ice – the frozen form of carbon dioxide (CO2) – can reliably ensure the cooling of the vaccine to temperatures below -70 °C which is required for some of the vaccines under development. But dry ice is also considered a dangerous good for air transport. The guidance outlines aspects that operators who wish to transport vaccines should take into account in their risk assessment of the proposed transport.

Ideally, vaccines cooled by dry ice should be carried in the lower deck cargo compartments but could also be transported in passenger cabins, providing the associated risks were mitigated. No passengers would be allowed on board in such cases.

Actions to be taken include ensuring proper functioning of the ventilation systems, aircraft loading considerations, route planning and diversion scenarios, the availability of sufficient oxygen on-board and the availability of detectors to monitor the level of CO2.

Source: EASA

Rail

€200 MIO GERMAN SCHEME PROMOTING SHIFT TO RAIL

On 17 December, the European Commission approved, under EU State aid rules, a German aid scheme to promote the shift of freight transport from road to rail. The measure will support companies willing to connect their facilities to the public railway network. In line with the goals of the European Green Deal, the German measure aims at contributing to a reduction of road congestion and CO2 emissions. The scheme has a yearly budget of €40 million and will run from 2021 to 2025.

The measure will support the development of private connecting railways ("sidings") and other related infrastructure promoting modal freight, including transshipment infrastructure. Under the scheme, companies will be compensated for up to 50% of the infrastructure costs (and up to 80% for transshipment infrastructure). The Commission found that the scheme is beneficial for the environment and for mobility as it supports rail transport, which is less polluting than road transport, while also decreasing road congestion. The Commission also found that the measure is proportionate and necessary to achieve the objective pursued, namely to support the modal shift from road to rail. On this basis, the Commission concluded that the measure complies with EU State aid rules, in particular Article 93 of the Treaty concerning the coordination of transport.

The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.58570 in the State aid register on the Commission's competition website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved.

Source: European Commission

EP APPROVES TEMPORARY RULES TO KEEP EUROTUNNEL WORKING

On 17 December, the European Parliament adopted temporary measures to keep the tunnel railway connection between continental Europe and the UK running after the end of the transition period. The temporary rules were approved under urgent procedure with 684 votes in favour (3 against, 2 abstentions). Parliament voted in October on legislation allowing France to negotiate a new international agreement with the UK regarding the governance of the Channel Tunnel Fixed Link. The Intergovernmental Commission would remain the main safety authority for the tunnel. That agreement has not yet been reached.

To avoid rail traffic being interrupted in the Channel Tunnel Fixed Link as of 1 January 2021, the Parliament agreed to temporarily extend safety licences and certificates to allow France and the UK sufficient time to conclude a bilateral agreement. The licence for the current tunnel infrastructure manager would remain valid for two months after the end of the transition period. The safety certificates and licences issued under EU law to UK companies would be extended for nine months.

The temporary rules have to be adopted also by the Council. They will enter into force when published on EU Official Journal and cease to apply on 1 October 2021 at the latest.

Source: European Parliament

EU YEAR OF RAIL 2021 – DESIGNATION SEALED BY COUNCIL

On 17 December, the Council formally adopted the decision on making 2021 the European Year of Rail, including a range of events and other initiatives to promote it. This designation, aimed at increasing the proportion of people and goods travelling by rail, is in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal.

In addition to promoting railways as a sustainable mode of transport capable of maintaining vital services even during unexpected crises, the objectives of the Year of Rail include raising awareness of the cross-border European dimension of rail transport and increasing its contribution to the EU's economy, industry and society.

The Commission is asked to consider launching two feasibility studies, one on the creation of a European label to promote goods transported by rail, and the other to explore the idea of a rail connectivity index, similar to the index that already exists for air transport. The Commission will inform the Council and the European Parliament of its plans by the end of March 2021.

The decision will now be signed by representatives of both institutions and published in the EU Official Journal. It will enter into force the day after its publication.

Source: Council of the EU

Supply Chain Security

EU CYBERSECURITY STRATEGY AND NIS2 PROPOSAL PUBLISHED

On 16 December, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy presented the new EU Cybersecurity Strategy, which aims at reinforcing Europe's collective resilience against cyber threats.

The strategy aims to build collective capabilities to respond to major cyberattacks. It also outlines plans to work with partners around the world to ensure international security and stability in cyberspace. Moreover, it outlines how a Joint Cyber Unit can ensure the most effective response to cyber threats using the collective resources and expertise available to Member States and the EU.

As part of the strategy, the draft proposal for a revised Directive on measures for high common level of cybersecurity across the Union (revised NIS Directive/NIS 2), and a new Directive on the resilience of critical entities were presented. Both Directives aim to address current and future online and offline risks, from cyberattacks to crime or natural disasters, in a coherent and complementary way. CLECAT’s Supply Chain Security Institute, which includes cybersecurity under its priorities, will convene early 2021 to discuss the way forward.

Source: European Commission

EU TRANSPORT CYBERSECURITY PACKAGE PUBLISHED

Last week, the European Commission published the Transport Cybersecurity Toolkit, which aims at strengthening cyber-awareness and cyber-hygiene amongst transport staff and decision-makers.

The toolkit, which has been discussed in its draft stages by the CLECAT Security Institute, contains basic information on the main cyberthreats and consequences, good practices of cyber-hygiene, general principles and guidance for generic transport staff. Additionally, it contains specific principles and guidance for staff in civil aviation, maritime, rail and road according to their operational needs and exposures to risk. The toolkit is structured into two levels:

- Level 1, the basic level, provides **basic principles of cyber-hygiene applicable to all transport staff**.
- Level 2, the advanced level, is designed for **transport staff who is in charge of managing security risks** (decision-makers in transport cybersecurity). It provides more **advanced guidance organised by mode of transport**, i.e. air, land and maritime transport.

Source: European Commission

Sustainable Logistics

CLECAT FEEDBACK ON THE TECHNICAL SCREENING CRITERIA FOR SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITIES

Last week, CLECAT submitted feedback to the European Commission on the draft delegated act on the EU classification system for green investments and in particular on the technical screening criteria for climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation of certain economic activities.

In its contribution, CLECAT emphasised that it has broadly supported the sustainable finance workstream of the European Commission, noting that the EU legislative framework for facilitating sustainable investments should take appropriate account of the transport and logistics sector and guide the financial market actors, willing to invest in cleaner modes of transport, as well as zero-emission transport technologies, digital logistics solutions and further development of low-carbon transport infrastructure in the EU.

Indeed, the ambitious European Green Deal decarbonisation objectives will require significant scaling-up of private investments in the transport and logistics sector. CLECAT has therefore welcomed the findings of the Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Finance (TEG) and the European Commission's initiative of establishing a delegated act to set out the EU-level technical screening criteria (i.e. taxonomy) for determining which economic activities qualify as sustainable and environmentallyfriendly. Hopefully, the proposed taxonomy will prove to be a key tool for the transition to a climate-neutral economy and help the industry achieve the 90% transport decarbonisation target, set out by the EU Green Deal and the new EU Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility.

The full CLECAT contribution can be found on the European Union's 'Have Your Say' webpage or here.

COUNCIL AGREES ITS POSITION ON EUROPEAN CLIMATE LAW

The Council reached agreement on a general approach on the proposal for a European Climate Law, including a new EU greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990, following the guidance of the European Council given on 10-11 December 2020. The main aim of the European Climate Law is to set into legislation the objective of a climate neutral EU by 2050.

Before the Regulation on a European Climate Law can be finally adopted, the Council, represented by the incoming Portuguese Presidency, and the European Parliament (EP) need to reach a political agreement on the proposal. Notedly, the Members of the EP want to raise the target to -60%.

Customs and Trade

EU AGREES NEW CUSTOMS PROGRAMME

On 15 December, the European Parliament and EU Member States reached a political agreement on the new Customs Programme for 2021-2027. The new €950 million Programme will help further modernise the Customs Union, equipping it with the tools needed to conduct appropriate controls, keep up with increasing trade volumes and tackle new and emerging forms of fraud. It will contribute to the implementation of the Customs Action Plan adopted in September this year.

The coronavirus crisis has highlighted the importance of having agile but robust customs processes and supporting national customs authorities in cooperating and exchanging information. With the help of the new Customs Programme, national authorities will be able to better exchange information and data and devise more efficient risk management strategies to fight customs fraud and respond to security threats. The Programme will also support customs administrations with the right training and tools to transition to a digital environment.

Subject to formal confirmation by the Council and the European Parliament on the provisional political agreement, the final text of the programme should be adopted in early 2021.

Source: European Commission

EU IMPROVES PREFERENTIAL TRADE

On 7 December, the Council of the EU adopted a package of 21 decisions to increase trade between the EU and neighbouring countries in the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean region. These decisions mean that the EU and 20 trading partners in the region will update their free trade agreement by modernising the rules of origin, to make them more flexible and business-friendly. The target date for the adoption of these amendments and their entry into force is 1 September 2021.

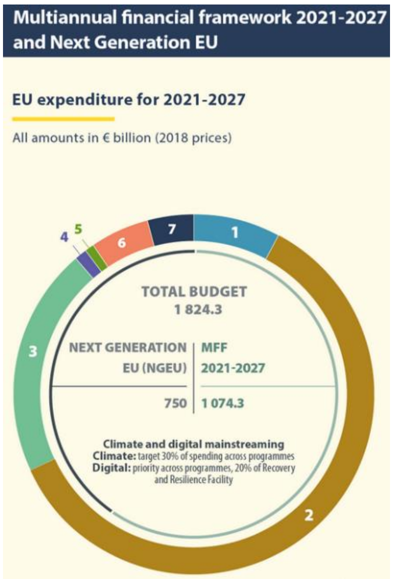
The new rules, which are the result of ten years of negotiations, will apply alongside those of the Regional Convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin (PEM Convention), pending the review of the Convention, which is currently under way.

In 2021, the European Commission will promote the new rules, which should contribute to the recovery of the regional economies of the participating countries. Online seminars and detailed guidance will be available for the business community, of customs authorities and other interested stakeholders.

Source and decisions: European Commission

General

COUNCIL ADOPTS EU LONG-TERM BUDGET FOR 2021-2027



On 17 December, the Council of the European Union adopted the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027. This provides for a long-term budget of €1 074.3 billion for the EU27 in 2018 prices, including the integration of the European Development Fund. Together with the Next Generation EU recovery instrument of €750 billion, it will allow the EU to provide an unprecedented €1.8 trillion of funding over the coming years to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the EU's long-term priorities across different policy areas. This includes making the EU greener, more digital, more resilient and better fit for the current and forthcoming challenges.

The EU will be spending €132.8 billion in the spending area of single market, innovation and digital and €377.8 billion on cohesion, resilience and values. These amounts will increase to €143.4 billion and €1 099.7 billion, respectively, with additional funding from the Next Generation EU, including loans to Member States.

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) will benefit from €18.4 billion. In order to support the digital transition, a new funding programme, Digital Europe, is established to promote the large-scale roll-out and uptake of key digital technologies, including state-of-the-art cybersecurity tools. The digital strand of the Connecting Europe Facility will also get a significant boost in funding.

Source: Council of the EU

€200 MILLION FOR IMPROVING EU TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

On 15 December, the Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) launched a call for proposals under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for transport funding instrument, which makes €200 million available for projects aiming to build, upgrade and improve European transport infrastructure. The call for proposals supports the projects concerning:

- Infrastructure projects for railways, inland waterways, maritime and inland ports;

- Infrastructure projects for road networks in the case of Member States with no railway network established in their territory or in the case of a Member State, or part thereof, with an isolated network without long-distance rail freight transport.

The budget available under the Cohesion envelope (reserved for applicants from the 15 EU Member States that are eligible for Cohesion Fund support) is €40 million. The budget available under the General envelope (open to applicants from all EU Member States) is €160 million.

Two types of applicants can submit their proposal:

- One or more Member States;
- With the agreement of the Member State(s) concerned, international organisations, joint undertakings, or public or private undertakings or bodies established in an EU Member State.

The call deadline is on 22 March 2021. More information can be found on the INEA website.

Contact
Nicolette van der Jagt
Director General CLECAT

Rue du Commerce 77, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium

Tel +32 2 503 4705 / **Fax** +32 2 503 47 52
E-mail nicolettevdjagt@clecat.org / info@clecat.org
@CLECAT_EU
www.CLECAT.org

CLECAT
European Association for Forwarding, Transport, Logistics and Customs Services