

## Newsletter Issue 4/24 January 2014

### MARITIME

#### PORT USERS ASK PARLIAMENT NOT TO WATER DOWN PORTS PROPOSAL

Port users are urging Members of the European Parliament to vote for a Ports Regulation have urged Members of the European Parliament Transport Committee to vote for a Ports Regulation which covers all port services, respects market functioning and ensures correct implementation of the basic Treaty principles. Many of the tabled amendments will make the proposal superfluous and should therefore not be supported.

In view of the upcoming vote in the Transport Committee (TRAN) of the European Parliament vote on a Commission proposal to liberalise market access to port services and increase financial transparency of ports, the port user community (shipowners/ECSA, freight forwarders/CLECAT, ship agents/FONASBA as well as cargo owners/ESC) has issued a joint open letter this week, asking Members of Parliament to keep a meaningful proposal and not to vote for amendments that would substantially weaken an already diluted Commission proposal.

Port users had already been disappointed by the fact that the Commission's proposal did not include cargo-handling and passenger services. The text stands to lose another layer of its meaningfulness if certain amendments (such as the exclusion of pilotage and other technical-nautical services from the market access chapter) are adopted, turning the proposed EU law into little more than an empty shell.

The joint open letter of the port users can be found [HERE](#).

#### CONSULTATION ON NEW INSTRUMENT TO FOLLOW MARCO POLO II

As reported recently, the Marco Polo II programme – an EU instrument supporting sustainable freight transport services since 2003 - will be discontinued in the current form beyond 2013. With the objective of improving efficiency and sustainability of European freight transport and logistics, the European Commission is going to apply a new approach in the programming period 2014 – 2020. Consequently, introduction of a new funding scheme for freight transport services is currently being examined under the framework of the revised Trans-European Transport Network programme<sup>1</sup> (in particular Article 32 thereof) and the new instrument Connecting Europe Facility<sup>2</sup>. CLECAT has been invited to a workshop to review underlying problems of Marco Polo and to review real market needs and areas of a potential EU intervention. The consortium consists of Ecorys, CE Delft, TNO (the Netherlands), Transport & Mobility Leuven (Belgium) and PNO (Austria)).

## ROAD

### WEIGHTS & DIMENSIONS DIRECTIVE – AMENDMENTS DISCUSSED IN TRAN

At the Committee on Transport and Tourism meeting on 21 January, the rapporteur Rapporteur Jörg Leichtfried (S&D, AT) presented his initial conclusions following the introduction of amendments (365 in total) on the Commission Proposal on the Weights and Dimensions Directive. CLECAT has challenged the Weights and Dimensions recommendations by MEP and Rapporteur, Jörg Leichtfried, which call for restrictions to aerodynamic truck design improvements that, as proposed by the European Commission, could increase road safety through better driver visibility, while cutting fuel use and thus CO2 emissions. The report also seeks to prevent the cross-border use of longer eco-friendly trucks able to transport a higher volume of goods using less fuel.

The highly disputed issue in TRAN remains the **cross-border** transport of longer vehicles. A possible compromise could be to only allow cross border transport of longer vehicles on pre-determined corridors. Importantly the rapporteur noted that ‘the European Commission cannot tamper with the current practice in the Northern countries, UK or Ireland.’

The areas where a compromise was within reach were on **aerodynamics**, where still some details were to be discussed, such as the exact length, however limited by FIA regulations; **on alternative propulsion**; on **safety** and also on **weight sensors** for controls.

The Commission, through its representative, Mr Fotis Karamitsos, Acting Deputy Director General of DG MOVE, expressed his disappointment on the fact that the debate moved from the initial intention of the Commission, which was to increase safety and lower emissions, to one single issue relating to longer vehicles and also referring to the fact that the Commission had proposed subsidiarity.

CLECAT voting recommendations were circulated last week to MEPs. CLECAT welcomed the provisions that seek to confirm that cross-border operation of longer and heavier vehicles is possible between countries who already decided to allow its use on their territory. Member States are best placed to decide whether they want to benefit from EMS vehicles or not.

## RAIL

### 6<sup>TH</sup> UIC/ FIATA MARKET PLACE SEMINAR IN TRIESTE

The International Federation of Freight Forwarders (FIATA) and the International Union of Railways (UIC) are jointly organising the 6th Rail Market Place Seminar (MPS) in Trieste, Italy on 2 and 3 April 2014. CLECAT is a supporting partner of the event and also speaker. The Market Place Seminar aims to create opportunities for increased cooperation and business development within the rail sector by offering a common platform for railway undertakings, terminal operators, freight forwarders, and customers. The theme of the seminar is ‘Strategic interchange between sea and rail freight: what’s new?’

The main subjects that will be discussed include:

- Trends and developments in the connection of sea and rail modes

- Loading technologies and handling of units in combined traffic
- Best practices in rail shunting within ports and industrial sites
- IT exchange with rail and port systems

[HTTP://WWW.MARKETPLACESEMINAR.ORG/](http://www.marketplaceseminar.org/)

## PROJECT MARATHON TESTS LONG FREIGHT TRAINS

Fret SNCF, Kombiverkehr and RFF ran their first 1.5 km long freight train between Sibelin yard near Lyon and Nîmes on January 18, marking the start of the demonstration phase of the Project Marathon research programme. The “double” train was carrying swap bodies on behalf of Frankfurt-based intermodal transport Kombiverkehr between Spain and Germany. Partially funded by an FP7 research grant from the EU, Project Marathon was launched in April 2011 and is due to run for three years. Building on earlier work by the New Opera programme, the aim is to reduce operating costs by 30% and increase the capacity of key freight corridors. The promoters believe that it should be possible to run five long trains in the paths needed for six conventional freight trains.

Longer trains will, in time, allow rail companies to capture traffic without applying for extra train slots. The double trains will also enable operators to achieve important productivity gains for all types of traffic. SNCF is working with RFF (the French rail network manager) to put these double trains into service on major European rail freight corridors in the next two years. Little investment would be required other than installing the remote control equipment on sufficient locomotives and lengthening some freight loops to take the longer trains.

Apart from Fret SNCF, RFF and Kombiverkehr, the 16 project partners include Swedish infrastructure manager Trafikverket, Alstom, Vossloh, Faiveley responsible for the train braking, Schweizer Electronic and Createch which developed the radio control system.

[HTTP://WWW.MARATHON-PROJECT.EU/](http://www.marathon-project.eu/)

## AIR

### IATA SURVEY SHOWS IMPROVING MOOD FOR THE AIR CARGO BUSINESS

IATA released this week the latest Airline Business Confidence Index, the monthly survey of airlines CFOs and heads of cargo. The results show an improving mood for the business, sustained by increased profit expectations, transport volumes and employment. Key points:

- Airline profit expectations remain strong and in line with levels seen since April 2013, according to IATA’s quarterly survey of airline CFOs and heads of cargo in January;
- Growth in cargo volumes is expected to pick-up over the next 12 months, at rates not seen since mid-2010, which reflects recent improvements in world trade growth and increases in business confidence;
- Input costs are reported to have declined during Q4, mostly as a result of cost cutting measures, and respondents expect costs to remain broadly stable over the next 12 months;
- Cargo yields are also expected to remain unchanged this year, despite expectations of stronger volume growth;

- Airline employment activity is reported to have increased during Q4, consistent with the improvement in financial performance that respondents indicated. The trend is expected to continue in the year ahead.

Please see the full report at the following [LINK](#).

## CUSTOMS

### VAT PILOT PROJECT ON COMPLEX CROSS-BORDER TRANSACTIONS EXTENDED

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014, DG TAXUD announced that the EU VAT Forum decided the extension of a test case for private VAT ruling requests relating to cross-border situations (CBR).

The pilot project allows businesses based in one of the participating Member States (Belgium, Estonia, Spain, France, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland and the United Kingdom), and which want to engage in a complex cross-border transaction involving two or more Member States, to submit their project to the tax administration of the country where they are registered for VAT purposes. On this basis and after consulting with tax administrations of other Member States involved, tax authorities will give businesses reassurance on the appropriate VAT treatment and applicable obligations in all Member States concerned.

The project officially started in June 2013 and was supposed to take an end in December 2013. But the first feedbacks from the participating Member States led the EU VAT Forum to extend the pilot project for another year (until December 2014). A mid-term review of the experiment will be made in June 2014. If the results are positive, the Commission may recommend to further develop this practice.

More information about the pilot project is available [HERE](#).

## GENERAL

### CONSULTATION ON FREIGHT TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

CLECAT has submitted its views on the stakeholders consultation on a long term EU strategy for Freight transport and Logistics. The questionnaire reflected on past EU logistics policy and will provide further guidance to the Commission in drafting new transport and logistics policy proposals.

The consortium in charge of the consultation consists of Ecorys, Fraunhofer, TCI, Prograns and AUB-RC/Translog, on behalf of the European Commission (DG MOVE). The consortium has been tasked to perform a study that creates a thorough understanding of the European freight transport sector and its challenges, with the eventual aim to contribute to the future development of a mid- to long-term policy strategy for the sector. An essential part of the study is dedicated to identifying and elaborating policy options and necessary actions for the follow up to the current Freight and Transport Logistics Action Plan (available [HERE](#)).

CLECAT is of the opinion that a solid logistics policy is needed to complete the internal market, do away with the barriers, promote best practices, in respect of subsidiarity. An integrated transport network, linking national infrastructure to core infrastructure along trans-European freight corridors is vital to the success of the economy. Industry, from its side, should continue to invest in initiatives to increase efficiencies through better use of available capacity (consolidation and cooperation), through the re-keying of information, re-developing IT systems and enhanced systems integration.

## TRANSPORT WEEK 2014

Transport Week 2014 will be held in the in Gdańsk (Poland) on 4-6<sup>th</sup> of March, 2014. This edition consists of several conferences, including: Clean Shipping Conference, Baltic Container Conference, Intermodal Conference and Offshore Wind – Logistic & Supplies Conference, accompanied by an exhibition.

CLECAT's Director General Nicolette van der Jagt will moderate the [INTERMODAL CONFERENCE](#) on the 6th March.

Last year's edition attracted more than 370 decision-makers from Europe. The forthcoming edition's meetings, lectures and panels are designed to tackle such topics, as: shipping in SECA after 1st January 2015; consequences and new strategies for terminals in response to new big ships arrival; the issue of P3 – optimizing container fleet, reaction of competitors; new TEN-T Policy; reaching Asia – by sea or rail?

For more information: [www.transportweek.eu](http://www.transportweek.eu).

## EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH GREEK LINE MINISTERS IN THE TRAN COMMITTEE

At the meeting from 20/21 January, the Members of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) had an exchange of views with the Greek Minister of Shipping, Maritime Affairs & the Aegean, Mr Miltiadis Varvitsiotis and the Greek Minister of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks, Mr Michalis Chrisochoidis.

*Mr Varvitsiotis* announced that, having maritime affairs as one of the 4 main priorities announced by the Greek Presidency of the European Council, there will be 2 co-chairs for the Council TRAN Committee, one chair being dedicated for shipping and maritime issues. He was on the opinion that Europe should not lose the shipping business and subsequently, lose jobs, and the competitiveness of the European shipping should be enhanced.

The focus will be on maritime equipment and how to enhance the collaboration with IMO. A Council meeting planned for the beginning of March in Athens will have the latter on the agenda. On legislation, the priorities will be the Marine Equipment Directive ( the multi-annual financial framework for the Maritime Safety Agency and Market access to port services and financial transparency of ports.

The MEPs were fairly pleased by the priorities, however several MEPs raised the importance of Maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management. The opinions on liberalisation on ports were highly diverging, with one Greek MEP from GUE/NGL saying that they will fight "tooth and nail" to stop the liberalisation. Minister Varvitsiotis acknowledged the difficulties on port liberalisation and reminded that the Greek ports are in a process of heavy privatisation

themselves and they need clear rules fast. The minister agreed that maritime special planning is needed, but as guidelines. On Blue Growth, he mentioned that they will follow the already-agreed [LIMASSOL DECLARATION](#).

*Mr Chrisochoidis*, said that his priority is the 4<sup>th</sup> Railway package. He was hoping that the Council could agree a general approach on the European Railway Agency file by March following the concern expressed by some MEPs that the Council is working very slow and that this may lead to a split in the package.

On aviation, the Airports Package and the air passenger rights will be the priorities. MEP Marinescu (S&D, RO), along with several other MEPs, asked for the Greek Presidency to kick the can on Single European Sky [2013/0186\(COD\)](#) as well. Minister Chrisochoidis referred to some 'big egos' in the Council which hinder progress, but promised to make efforts 'if time allows.'

On road transport, the focus will be on the weights and dimensions Directive, acknowledging the difficulties on this legislation and expressing his opinion that the proposal is unlikely to progress.

Finally, adopting conclusions on Urban Mobility, Deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure [2013/0012\(COD\)](#), Shift2Rail and the Naiades II inland waterway transport package will also be on the agenda.

## EU SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN PARTIALLY SUSPENDED

The European Union has suspended some sanctions on Iran, after the International Atomic Energy Agency said that Iran had halted elements of its nuclear programme. The sanctions will be suspended for six months.

More precisely, the European Union will not pursue new nuclear-related EU sanctions and suspend following sanctions:

- The prohibition on the import, purchase or transport of Iranian petrochemical products. The suspension will also cover the provision of all related services such as financing, financial assistance, insurance and reinsurance, including for third States.
- The prohibition on trade in gold and precious metals with the government of Iran, its public bodies and the Central Bank of Iran, or persons and entities acting on their behalf. The suspension will also cover related services such as transportation.
- The prohibition on the provision of insurance and transport in relation to Iranian crude oil. This suspension will allow the provision of transportation and insurance services to third states importing Iranian oil.

Furthermore, the EU will facilitate financial transfers for non-sanctioned trade, including for humanitarian purposes, such as food and medicines, by increasing tenfold all the EU authorisation thresholds.

The new provisions will be directly applicable in all EU Member States and can be found [HERE](#).

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 30 January, 20th Meeting of the EU-U.S. Transport Security Cooperation Group Brussels
- 31 January, TFL Journées Internationale de Transport, Paris
- 4 March, FERRMED Conference: "Efficient multimodal transport in Europe through FERRMED standards" EU Parliament in Brussels
- 6 March, [TRANSPORT WEEK](#), Gdansk
- 2-3 April, [MARKET PLACE SEMINAR](#), Trieste

### CLECAT MEETINGS

#### Security Institute

- **CHANGE:** 6 May (morning)

#### Air Freight Institute

- **CHANGE:** 6 May (afternoon)

#### Maritime Institute

- **CHANGE:** 7 May (morning)

#### Sustainable Logistics Advisory Body

- **CHANGE:** 7 May (afternoon)

#### Road Institute

- 19 March 2014, Zurich (joint meeting with FIATA)

#### Board and General Assembly

- 3<sup>rd</sup> June, Brussels

### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

#### Transport and Tourism Committee Meeting

- Thursday, 30 January 2014
  - SES II+ - vote / Marinescu / Sassoli
  - Port services Regulation – consideration of amendments / Fleckenstein

### COUNCIL

#### Transport Council

- 14 March 2014