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NEWS FROM BRUSSELS

TRAN Committee to vote on the Regulation on Port Services

Following some delays Members of the European Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) are expected to vote on the Commission's proposal for a Regulation on market access to port services and financial transparency of ports on the 25th January. Based on amendments introduced by Rapporteur Knut Fleckenstein (S&D), procedures for limitation and selection of port service providers are notably bound to become much more straightforward. CLECAT will make voting recommendations based on the final compromise amendments.

The TRAN Committee will also hear the Luxembourg Minister for Infrastructure and Sustainable Development, Mr François Bausch who will give a presentation of conclusions of the Presidency and the Dutch Minister for Infrastructure and Environment, Ms Melanie Schulz Van Haegen who will present the Presidency to the European Parliament.

AVIATION

New European carriers association split over unfair subsidies

The largest European airlines will join forces on 20 January to address growing costs. But differences over how to face foreign rivals will impede a unified challenge to competition abroad. The Lufthansa group, Air France-KLM, Easyjet, Ryanair and International Airlines Group (the holding company of British Airways, Iberia, Aer Lingus and Vueling) will create a new association in order to offer a "unified voice" on issues such as airport charges, air traffic management, taxation on passengers, emissions trading and passenger rights.

The 'big five' will set up its own lobbying organisation dealing with these issues, going head to head with the Association of European Airlines, which represents 22 European carriers. However, the association will not deal with the hottest issue on the European carriers' plate at the moment: fighting back against unfair practices by a number of foreign rivals, particularly from the Gulf countries. "This is the only topic on which there is not a common understanding," a spokesperson for the association told EurActiv.

As part of the new agreements to negotiate with Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey, the European Commission intends to address the alleged subsidies given to their national carriers, according to the aviation strategy announced last December.

While the response to subsidies has divided European airlines and member states alike, with France and Germany championing the toughest stance, the Gulf airlines have shown different attitudes to the EU aviation strategy.

Dubai's Emirates questioned whether the European Commission was acting consistently with state-owned carriers, funded by other nations, such as India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka operating in the EU, as well as with "anti-trust immunised joint ventures between European and non-European carriers and other protected commercial arrangements of this nature".

However, Etihad welcomed the aviation strategy. "Etihad will continue to work constructively with the EU institutions to pursue the Commission's proposed holistic strategy to enhance the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of Europe's aviation infrastructure and to promote consumer choice, connectivity, innovation, legal certainty and investment," the company said.

The European Commission expects to receive authorisation from the Council this semester to kick off the negotiations with the oil-rich monarchies. However, officials warned that this issue is highly controversial, and there is only one scheduled Transport Council in June, during the current Dutch Presidency of the EU.

The Dutch Presidency intends to be "realistic and pragmatic", but it does not expect to adopt any conclusions on this issue during its semester at the EU's helm, a spokesperson said. The first discussion on the aviation strategy will take place during the aviation summit to be held in Schiphol airport on 21 January. Member states and MEPs, together with other officials, are expected to discuss the future of the aviation sector, including the pillars of the aviation strategy itself.

CLECAT's POSITION PAPER on the aviation strategy welcomes the Commission's intention to pursue fair global competition, but calls for this principle to be applied equally across the board and warns against EU protectionism at home.

Source: EurActiv, 6/01/2016

MARITIME

CONTAINER CONTRACT RATES FOLLOW SPOT PRICES DOWNWARDS

Shippers on major East-West container trade lanes have reported significant drops in contract rates in the latter months of 2015. According to Drewry's Benchmarking Club, a closed user group of multinational retailers and manufacturers which closely monitor their transpacific and Asia-Europe contract freight rates, average ocean freight rates for cargo moving under contracts on the major East-West trade routes saw a major reduction in the last quarter of 2015.

Drewry's Benchmarking Club Contract Rate Index declined by 5% between August and November last year and by 14% between February and November, with a sharp decline in the third quarter of 2015. According to Drewry, the reduction in contract rates was driven by a combination of lower fuel costs, excess vessel capacity and intensive competition between shipping lines. "Bunker costs fell notably from the fourth quarter of 2014 and this contributed to a reduction in contract rates negotiated over the course of last year," said the analyst. "The fall in the Drewry Benchmarking Club Contract Rate Index between February and November 2015 was as much as 14%. This trend was also reflected in the spot market." Part of the fall in contract rates resulted from carriers giving some shippers temporary reductions in contract rates to secure cargo, Drewry noted.

Philip Damas, director of Drewry Supply Chain Advisors, said it was no surprise that contract rates had fallen further through the latter part of 2015, as the effect of falling fuel costs and continuing overcapacity weakened market rates. “Given the volatility of rates in both the spot and the contract market, more shippers are turning to Drewry’s Benchmarking Club to ensure that they are securing the best rates in the market,” he added.

The *JOC* estimates that up to 70% of containerised cargo on Asia-Europe trades moves under contract, which tend to cover either annual, six-month or three-month periods, while the percentage of contracted cargo on the transpacific is far higher. Some analysts believe that the current overcapacity on east-west trades means that container lines will struggle to secure contract rates at profitable levels this year, although most major shippers are still expected to transport their cargo under contract deals with lines in order to secure space guarantees.

Source: Lloyd’s Loading List, 8/01/2016

ROAD

GERMANY ENCOURAGED TO SUPPORT COMMISSION’S TOLL PROPOSALS

Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc wants to put an end to the EU's various toll schemes, and has rejected German Minister for Transport Alexander Dobrindt's proposed plans on the matter. Bulc told Die Welt that it is possible that the European Commission will present proposals this year that could serve "as the basis for a European toll system for trucks and cars". Therefore, EU member states that have opted to toll their roadways would be organised into one single system. "I invite Germany to support us in this proposal," said the Slovenian politician. "We need a European solution for road charges," she continued, adding that, "Many different toll systems are a barrier to mobility within the internal market."

Germany has had its toll scheme rejected by the Commission in the past, which cited unacceptable discrimination against non-German citizens. According to Berlin's plans, Germans would receive discounts when using tolled roadways. Bavaria's Minister President, Horst Seehofer (CSU), announced at the weekend that he would soon seek an end to Brussels' veto.

Bulc reiterated the EU executive's stance on the issue during her interview with *Die Welt*, saying "There should be no discrimination based on nationality." It would be incompatible with EU law. In terms of the ongoing infringement procedure, the ball is now in Berlin's court. "In December, we requested additional information from the German authorities and have asked for an answer by February," she added. The Commission formally launched an infringement procedure against Germany on 18 June last year. Due to the ongoing disagreement, Dobrindt's plan, which was to have been implemented early this year, has now been postponed indefinitely.

Source: Euractiv, 6/01/2016

NEW MIGRANT CAMP AT DUNKIRK “WILL DOUBLE THE PROBLEM FOR UK-BOUND HAULIERS”

The UK’s Road Haulage Association (RHA) is dismayed at the news that a new migrant camp is to be built at the Dunkirk ferry port, approximately 30 miles from the Port of Calais. “This will not solve the problem of migrants causing yet more misery for the thousands of UK-bound hauliers who regularly use this alternative route to cross the Channel," said RHA Chief Executive Richard Burnett.

"The issue must be resolved, not doubled," he said. "Britain has committed £19m in funding for fences, CCTV and other security measures at Calais since the crisis erupted in June and has already invested £7m in a secure HGV parking area and additional fencing at the Port. We now learn that the French government will apparently be picking up the £1.1m bill for the new camp. As experience has clearly shown, this will barely scratch the surface of the problem."

He went on saying that "migrants at Calais already outnumber security officials by 18:1. Our greatest concern is that the number of staff will be reduced and redeployed at Dunkirk. The inevitable outcome of this will be that what is already a bad situation will get much, much worse. It is unthinkable that lives, already at risk, are lost." The RHA will continue to push for deployment of the French military at Calais and will be requesting a meeting with the Mayor of Calais, Madame Natacha Bouchart. Madame Bouchart has also voiced her concerns for the citizens of Calais who have been placed in an untenable situation. "This is now a critical situation which cannot be allowed to continue," continued Richard Burnett. "The lives and livelihoods for hauliers and for thousands of Calaisians are now being put at severe risk. Pressure must be brought to bear on the French government to act." Concluding, he said: "The situation at Calais will not disappear any time soon and that is where the focus must remain. It must be addressed and resolved as effectively and quickly as possible. Duplicating the problem to another port 30 miles away is not the answer."

Source: RHA, 5/01/ 2016

RAIL

CHINA BUILDING HIGH-SPEED FREIGHT TRAINS

A state-owned company in China is building high-speed freight trains able to run at speeds of up to 250km/h on tracks now carrying passenger-only bullet trains, Chinese business news service *Caixin* reports. Citing an executive at China Railway Rolling Stock Corp (CRRC), it said the country's first super-fast freight train had been designed to haul cargo at speeds of up to 250 kph and would roll off an assembly line in the first half of 2016. The new freight trains are said to be modelled on existing bullet trains, which can run at up to 350 kph.

China Railway Corp. (CRC), the nation's railway operator, started developing a freight bullet train in 2014 in cooperation with CRRC's predecessors, China CNR Corp. and CSR Corp., the executive said. The freight trains will be able to travel on some of the more than 16,000 kilometres of high-speed rail lines across China, transporting higher-value cargo such as e-commerce deliveries rather than bulk commodities such as coal, the sources said. Most freight trains follow rail lines designed only for low-speed travel. China's fastest freight trains, which were put into service starting late 2014, can run up to 160kph.

Demand for non-bulk cargo has been rising, spurring development of a high-speed freight train, the CRC employee said. CRC trains hauled about 2.5 billion tonnes of goods in the first nine months of the year, down 11.4% from the same period in 2014, but non-bulk cargo tonnage rose 12.2%.To meet this demand, last year the CRC deployed six express cargo trains running on four routes to carry non-bulk cargo. These trains can run at speeds of up to 120 kph, *Caixin* reported.

Source: Lloyd's Loading List, 07/01/2016

SUSTAINABLE LOGISTICS

UN ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON MULTIMODAL TRANSIT CORRIDORS

The UN General Assembly has adopted a new resolution "Toward comprehensive co-operation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors." Co-sponsored by 85 UN Member States, the new UN resolution focuses on multimodal transport, transit corridors and trade facilitation, while inciting Member States that have not yet done so to join the TIR Convention.

According to Igor Runov, Head of the IRU Delegation to the UN, "This historic Resolution represents a holistic and comprehensive approach to pursuing sustainable transport goals and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. It provides a much-needed focus on transport and transit, trade facilitation, infrastructure, financing and public-private partnerships to achieve these goals, which is embodied in the mission of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport."

The Resolution cites the role of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport (GPST) as an innovative business and industry-led, action oriented, multi-stakeholder initiative involving all modes of transport, in promoting global co-operation and co-ordination on sustainable transport issues.
The resolution can be downloaded from the UN's website.

Source: IRU, 23/12/2015

GENERAL

BRUSSELS APPROVES FEDEX ACQUISITION OF TNT

FedEx and TNT Express have jointly announced that they have obtained the "unconditional" approval of the European Commission in connection with the proposed acquisition of TNT Express by FedEx.
The decision follows an in-depth investigation into the proposed deal after the EU competition watchdog's initial investigation raised concerns that the merger would significantly reduce competition in the market for international express services.

The preliminary investigation indicated that the other two global 'integrators', DHL and UPS, would be the only significant competitive constraint on the merged entity for most international express services. "As the proposed transaction would reduce the number of 'integrators' competing in the EEA from four to three, the competitive constraint on the merged entity would be significantly reduced, leading to a concentrated market in several Member States for international express delivery services to a destination within or outside the EEA," the European Commission said last July.

Source: Lloyd's Loading List, 8/01/ 2016 (extract)

€12.7 BILLION TO SUPPORT 263 EUROPEAN TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) signed the final grant agreements for the last batch of Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) projects, finishing a process which started over a year ago with the publication of the 2014 CEF Transport Calls for Proposals. A total of €12.7 billion of EU investment will support 263 transport infrastructure projects which will deliver faster, safer and greener mobility for the entire Union.

Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc said "I am glad that today the largest investment ever made by the EU in the transport area is becoming a reality. All these projects will better connect Europe and boost competitiveness, growth and jobs. By contributing to the decarbonisation of the transport sector through greener fuels and digital integration, they will also advance on two priorities of the Commission: Energy Union and Digital Agenda."

INEA Executive Director Dirk Beckers, who signed the last grant agreements between beneficiaries and the Agency, remarked: "I am very happy that after these last signatures, all the 2014 CEF transport projects have officially begun. The Agency will now ensure that everything proceeds according to plan so that each individual project can deliver as planned and we can build an integrated transport network across the European Union. INEA will support all projects during their lifetime, as it has always done, offering its expertise so that everything is delivered on time and according to plan."

The 263 projects are primarily located on the core trans-European transport network and 43 of these, worth nearly €4.6 billion, take place wholly in EU countries eligible for support from the Cohesion Fund. . Among the beneficiaries are flagship initiatives such as Rail Baltica, the Brenner Base Tunnel, the Seine-Schelde waterway, the Caland Bridge and the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link. Smaller-scale initiatives include cross-border projects between Groningen and Bremen, the Iron Rhine rail line, LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) deployment plans or projects enhancing the navigability of the Danube River.

Source: INEA, 7/01/2016

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CLECAT MEETINGS:

Air Logistics Institute

- 2 March 2016, Brussels

Supply Chain Security Institute

- 2 March 2016, Brussels

Road Logistics Institute

- 3 March 2016, Brussels

Sustainable Logistics Institute

- 3 March 2016, Brussels

Customs and Indirect Taxation Institute

- 4 March 2016, Brussels

Board/General Assembly

- 22 juni 2016, Rotterdam

OTHER EVENTS with CLECAT PARTICIPATION

Swiss Shippers' Council Conference

- 21-22 January, Interlaken

INTTRA'S EVGM initiative

- 26 January, Hamburg

ALICE workshop

- 2-3 February, Vienna

ACEA Stakeholders event

- 16 February, Brussels

ITF annual consultation meeting

- 17 February, Paris

FIATA HQ Meetings

- 16-20 March, Zurich

DTLF Plenary meeting

- 16 March & 20 September 2016

ITF 2016 Summit on Green and Inclusive Transport

- 18-20 May Leipzig, Germany

Conference on the rail freight corridors – NL Presidency

- 21 June Rotterdam, Netherlands

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Transport Committee

- 25 January 2016 (afternoon), Brussels
- 15-16 February 2016, Brussels

Internal market Committee

- 14 January 2016, Brussels