Newsletter Issue 25 / 29 June 2015

NEWS FROM BRUSSELS

Reshuffle of EC Senior Management

The European Commission has announced the re-shuffling of several senior management positions, including the Directors General of DG MOVE and DG TAXUD.

Joao Aguiar Machado is to leave his position at the head of DG MOVE to become Director General of DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. He will be replaced by Henrik Hololei, currently a Deputy Secretary General of the Commission and previously the Head of Cabinet to the former Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas.

The current Director General of DG TAXUD, Heinz Zourek, is to be replaced by Stephen Quest, currently Director General of DG Informatics. Daniel Calleja Crespo, currently the Director General of DG Internal Market and previously Director for Air Transport in DG MOVE.

TEN-T Days 2015 in Riga

On the 22nd and 23rd of June, the high-level transport conference 'TEN-T Days' took place in Riga, organised by the European Commission, in cooperation with the Latvian Presidency. This edition of the TEN-T Days focuses on the challenges faced by the new trans-European networks (TEN-T) in attracting innovative funding solutions.

Violeta Bulc, EU Commissioner for Transport said, "We must join forces to make the trans-European transport network a reality. The basis for our future progress is the implementation of the work plans, including key cross-border projects. I am counting on all actors – national and regional, public and private, to make the best use of our instruments such as Connecting Europe Facility and the new European Fund for Strategic Investments. In this respect, the recommendations made in the Christophersen – Bodewig – Secchi report play a vital role in attracting the necessary private investment."

Amongst the many results of the TEN-T Days is the signature by the Ministers of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland of a declaration on the implementation of the Rail-Baltica project, which is to become the backbone of the North Sea Baltic Core Network Corridor. Furthermore, Commissioner Bulc and Ministers of the Western Balkan States agreed on the indicative extension of the Core network and the Corridors in the Western Balkan countries. The mandate of the Corridor Coordinators will also be extended into the region.

On the occasion of the conference, the Commission also presented the results of a study on the Core Network Corridors. Key findings show that the impact of EU investment in transport infrastructure is

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high: 1.8% of GDP growth and 10 million jobs will be created. These positive effects on the economy and the job market will last until 2030.

On 10 July 2015, the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Committee will vote on the projects selected for the allocation of funds. €11.9 billion of EU funding are available to improve European transport connections.
European Commission Press Release, 22/06/2015

ROAD

TRANSPORT MINISTERS APPROVE QUALITY CHARTER FOR ROAD FREIGHT

A Quality Charter for international road haulage operations has been approved by the transport ministers of the European member countries of the International Transport Forum at the OECD. The Quality Charter establishes qualification standards for companies, managers and drivers and will enter into force on 1 January 2016. It applies to pan-European road haulage operations under the Multilateral Quota system established in 1974 by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), which evolved into the International Transport Forum (ITF) in 2006.

In a statement issued with the approval of the Quality Charter, ministers of the European member countries of the International Transport Forum "commit to engage their efforts towards having the provisions of the Charter applied to all international transport operations carried under the ECMT Multilateral Quota as of 1 January 2018."

José Viegas, Secretary-General of the International Transport Forum, which manages the Multilateral Quota system, said: "The approval of the Quality Charter is a major step towards harmonisation of conditions in the pan-European road freight transport market. The Charter, alongside the incitation mechanisms already in place for adoption of the most technologically advanced trucks, will establish the Multilateral Quota system as a symbol of quality, safety and environmental standards in road transport."

The approval of the Quality Charter completes longstanding work by the ITF on defining and promoting the highest standards for freight transport operators, managers and drivers at Pan-European level. The ITF will monitor the implementation of the provisions of the Quality Charter by the member countries through its European Road Transport Group. It will also define follow-up actions for the further development of the Multilateral Quota system.

The text of the Quality Charter is available here

Source: OECD Press Release, 22/06/2015

MARITIME

PORTS CALL ON THE COMMISSION AND THE EIB TO CONSIDER THE NEED OF PORT INVESTMENTS

On the occasion of the TEN-T days in Riga and prior to the Parliament vote on the Juncker plan, the European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) and the European Federation of Inland Ports (EFIP) called on the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) to give priority to transport and especially port projects, when assessing investment projects.

Europe's sea and inland ports have a prominent place in the newly developed TEN-T network: around 550 ports are part of the TEN-T network, more than 100 are recognized as core seaports, while almost 80 are core inland ports. Moreover, seaports are the entry and exit gate to the nine multimodal corridors and many inland ports are strategic multimodal nodes in the hinterland network, linking inland waterways with all other modes of transport.

The associations note that so as to fully play their role in Europe's transport Infrastructure plan, huge investments are needed for port infrastructure and infrastructure linking the ports with the corridors. Different factors are cited by the associations to explain the need for new and upgraded transport and port infrastructure:

- International freight volumes are expected to grow fourfold by 2050;
- The volumes in ports are more and more clustered as a consequence of the increasing size of vessels: this implies adaptations of port and hinterland infrastructure;
- The conversion to alternative fuels obliging ports to invest in adequate infrastructure;
- Ports are important nodes and suppliers of energy: the changing energy landscape will imply huge investments in and around ports;
- New environmental obligations;
- Finding adequate financing for transport infrastructure becomes more difficult in a context of national budget constraints.

Based on the final reports of the nine corridors, there is already more than 40 billion EUR needed to realize the sea port infrastructure projects only. ESPO and EFIP express concern that the remaining CEF envelope will not be able at all to address the needs identified, since the grant envelope has been reduced by 2.2 billion as a result of the transfer to the Juncker plan.

As for the Juncker plan, ESPO and EFIP are concerned that the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) may not take into consideration the important infrastructure investments that the port sector needs. In fact, the EFSI will not follow the TEN-T priorities for funding of transport infrastructure and the prioritisation as defined in the Corridor approach.

Source: ESPO Press Release, 22/06/2015

Ocean 3 peak season service suspension 'unprecedented' but may set a precedent

A surprise decision by the Ocean Three alliance to withdraw one of its four Asia-North Europe strings for three months at the start of the traditional peak season is an "unprecedented" move, said transport analyst Alphaliner on 25 June.

The radical action by O3 carriers CMA CGM, UASC and China Shipping will see the alliance's weekly capacity to North Europe cut by around 20% to 40,000-48,000 teu over the 12-week period. However, according to Alphaliner the O3 alliance may be forced to make the cut permanent, as cargo prospects are unlikely to improve by the end of September. It remains to be seen whether the other three east-west alliances will follow O3's lead and opt for temporary service suspensions over their current strategy of ad-hoc blanking of voyages – much will depend on the success of the 1 July general rate increases, and how long they hold. Twelve weeks of cancelled sailings will likely force the temporary idling of some of the 11,000-13,000 teu ships deployed on the withdrawn O3 service, and they are likely to be registered on Alphaliner's fortnightly listing of idled ships.

The number of containerships in lay-up is often a barometer of the industry's health – at the height of the financial crisis in 2009, nearly 600 container vessels were mothballed. However, the laid-up containership fleet has shrunk to less than 100 vessels, despite overcapacity plaguing many of the world's tradelanes.

Hitherto, few ships of over 7,500 teu were consigned to lay-up, as carriers regarded it as a last resort and perceived weakness in their business strategy. And there is significant cost and administration in sending a big ship into hot or cold lay-up – in the latter, the vessel often requires at least two weeks' preparation before redeployment. To overcome temporary surplus capacity, such as following delivery of a new ULCV, carriers have until now used maintenance and survey downtime and more slow-steaming to keep vessels employed. But this could be about to change as the container lines come to terms with the reality of too much tonnage chasing cargo in depressed markets.

Laying-up ULCVs will initially have a negative impact on carrier balance sheets and there is a real risk that rivals will seize the opportunity to grab market share by tapping their customers, but in the current climate where spot rates barely cover stevedoring costs, there seems little option left for carriers. Moreover, carriers will need to examine the small print of their new build vessel contracts to check the option of postponing delivery of some of the 25 ULCVs due this year, as well as the 46 scheduled for 2016. The lay-up process becomes more complex within an alliance where consensus is necessary – the current situation will be the first big test of the strength of the vessel-sharing agreements.
Source: THE LOADSTAR, 25/06/2015

RAIL

ERA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: MILESTONE FOR THE SINGLE EUROPEAN RAILWAY AREA

On the occasion of the 2015 UNIFE General Assembly which took place in Bucharest earlier this month, Josef Doppelbauer, Executive Director, European Railway Agency, said: 'By reaching a political agreement on the Technical Pillar of the Fourth Railway Package we experimented a fundamental milestone for the establishment of the Single European Railway Area. It took two years until this adoption because there were political pressures in Europe regarding the market opening, international operation, interoperability and safety. The transition period until the European Railway Agency has to be ready with the implementing of the Technical Pillar is 3 years. EU member states may extend this period by one year, if they notify the ERA and the European Commission and justify the extension. The ambition of the Technical Pillar of the Fourth Railway Package is to support the European railway industry to be more competitive and to be able to offer quality railway services for freight and passenger transport.'

The aim of the changes is to cut administrative costs for rail operators and make it easier for new operators to enter the rail market. One of the main changes concerns the European Railway Agency (ERA). At the moment, it plays a key role in promoting interoperability and harmonising technical standards for the whole EU market. However, national technical and safety rules remain alongside the EU ones drafted by ERA, which creates unnecessary complexity for rail operators. The proposed revisions would make ERA the sole body responsible for issuing vehicle authorisations and safety certificates across the whole EU. Alongside the changes in responsibilities for ERA, the 4th railway package also includes updates to existing legislation on interoperability and rail safety. These changes aim to remove the remaining administrative and technical barriers to the creation of a Single European Railway Area.

Source: [Railway Pro](), 18/06/2015
CLECAT also welcomed the progress that has been made on the technical pillar of the 4th Railway Package in removing barriers to interoperability. Now is the time to make progress on the governance part and to remove the remaining barriers in the Market pillar.

CUSTOMS

CLECAT Customs Institute meets in Ljubljana

The Customs and Indirect Taxation Institute of CLECAT met, at the kind invitation of its Slovenian Member organisation GZS, in Ljubljana on the 25th and 26th June. Members discussed, inter alia:

- The state of play of the UCC Delegate and Implementing acts
- The state of play of the UCC IT transitional provisions
- The situation in Russia regarding TIR Carnet
- The state of play of the EU initiative regarding customs infringements and sanctions
- The initiative of the European Commission regarding VAT aspects in e-commerce
- The additional duties applied by Turkey on non-EU goods.

A very interesting port tour was organised on the 25th June in the Port of Koper. The port of Koper received last year the ESPO Award on innovative environmental projects in recognition of its work in creating a sustainable future for the port and its surroundings. The Port of Koper won the 2014 Award for its project, No Waste, Just Resources!

The next CITI meeting will take place on the Thursday 15th October in Brussels.

SUSTAINABLE LOGISTICS

Last Mile Logistics final Conference: "The future of last mile logistics"

CLECAT participated at the 'Last Mile Logistics' (LaMilo) final conference which was held on the 24th of June in Brussels. The LaMilo project, an INTERREG IVB North West Europe (NWE) project funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), aimed to create a step change in freight deliveries by identifying challenges and opportunities to improve 'last mile' supply chains, encouraging more sustainable transport methods and ensuring a more efficient and integrated logistics approach throughout North West Europe (NWE).

Delegates heard how LaMiLo is exploring solutions to improve deliveries to businesses, the public sector and consumers in cities across North West Europe (NWE). Through a number of innovative pilots, project partners have measured the environmental impacts of last mile deliveries and have engaged with private and public sector organisations, as well as end users, to understand how to help influence their behaviour to adopt more efficient and sustainable practices.

Ian Short, Chief Executive at the institute for sustainability in the UK and LaMiLo lead partner said 'While most organisations work to improve their delivery supply chains to large retailers, many do not focus on 'last mile' deliveries to homes or smaller shops. Freight vehicles typically represent 8-15% of total traffic flow in urban areas and, when they park to make collections or deliveries, they often reduce road capacity and contribute to congestion. By demonstrating the environmental, economic and social benefits of consolidating deliveries, LaMiLo is encouraging the use of more innovative approaches and technologies. LaMiLo pilots across Europe have had considerable success in demonstrating the positive impact these changes can make to quality of life and the environment, but crucially also to operating costs."

The conference included perspectives from all sectors on delivering sustainable logistics, how ICT technologies can enable more efficient and smarter deliveries in the city and how policy can support this across NWE and beyond. Speaking for DG MOVE, Astrid Schlewing highlighted that transport logistics requires an integrated approach across modes and sectors and a system perspective including urban transport systems.

GENERAL

SPURRING ECONOMIC RECOVERY: PARLIAMENT APPROVES JUNCKER PLAN RULES

The €315-billion "Juncker" investment plan, announced by the European Commission last November to encourage the financing of viable investments in Europe, was backed by the European Parliament in a vote on Wednesday. Parliament approved the fund's rules by 464 votes to 131 with 19 abstentions. The vote marks the end of a rapid legislative process, demonstrating Parliament's commitment to the plan. Parliament sought to improve the financing structure of the plan's guarantee fund, the fund's governance rules, its working arrangements and its democratic accountability. The key achievements were:

- Scaling back cuts in the EU's "Horizon2020" research and innovation programme and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF – to link up Europe's energy, transport and digital networks) by €1 billion. Horizon 2020 and CEF, two of the three sources of financing for the EU guarantee backing the plan, will now contribute €2.2 billion and €2.8 billion respectively, i.e. €500 million each less than was originally proposed;
- Ensuring that the €1 billion salvaged for the programmes will be paid for out of the unused budget margins of 2014 and 2015;
- Winning the right for Parliament to approve the appointment of the managing director and the deputy managing director the investment fund;
- Stipulating that the list of approved projects will be public;
- Requiring that a set of project selection criteria and a list of project goals be drawn up to ensure that projects selected are in line with the general priorities of the Union.

Now that Parliament has approved the rules, the Council of Ministers needs to do likewise. The Council confirmed its provisional agreement with Parliament on 9 June and is expected to give its final approval in a written procedure soon. The Juncker Plan regulation then enters into force at the start of July, and the fund is expected to be fully operational by September.

Source: European Parliament News, 24/06/2015

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CLECAT MEETINGS:

Air Logistics Institute
- 13 October 2015 (morning), Brussels

Supply Chain Security Institute
- 13 October 2015 (afternoon), Brussels

Road Logistics Institute
- 14 October 2015 (morning), Brussels

Sustainable Logistics Institute
- 14 October 2015 (afternoon), Brussels

Customs and Indirect Taxation Institute
- 15 October 2015, Brussels

Maritime Logistics Institute
- 18 November 2015, Brussels

CLECAT Freight Forwarders Forum
- 19 November 2015

OTHER EVENTS with CLECAT PARTICIPATION

Digital Transport and Logistics Forum
- 1-2 July 2015, Brussels

ALICE Plenary & IPIC conference
- 6-7 July, Paris

IPCSA seminar on Cybersecurity
- 15 July, London

FIATA Working Group Road Transport meeting
- 25 August 2015, Varna Bulgaria

FIATA 2015 World Congress
- 8 – 13 September, Taipei

FERRMED Conference, Brussels
- 12 November 2015

EU meetings

European Parliament

Transport Committee
- 29 June 2015 (afternoon), Brussels
  Agenda available HERE
- 13 July 2015 (afternoon), Brussels
- 14 July 2015 (morning and afternoon), Brussels

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