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

NEWSLETTER

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News from Brussels

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VOTES IN FAVOR OF PORTS REGULATION

The European Parliament adopted the new EU Port Services Regulation on 14 December, following agreement in trilogue with the Council. The Regulation will create an enabling framework for maritime ports to reap the full benefits of the internal market, the EU investment plan and the Energy Union. Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc said, "The Regulation adopted today will give European ports a boost by facilitating private investment, by encouraging a better use of public resources and more efficient port operations, while ensuring an adequate training of workers."

"After 15 years of discussion about European ports policy, we have finally found an agreement: existing port management models can be maintained and, for the first time, there is an emphasis on good working conditions, which are a major part of the competitiveness of ports and are nonnegotiable for us", said rapporteur Knut Fleckenstein (S&D, Germany). "Financial transparency is at the core of the agreement, which should facilitate the work of the Commission on a coherent state aid regime and trigger investments into ports", he added.

The lack of clear rules on public funding of port infrastructure and charges for using it holds back investment in ports, says the EU Commission. The new rules aim to make EU ports more efficient and attractive to investors. These rules apply to over 300 EU seaports in the trans-European transport network. They include a requirement for ports to show clearly in their accounting systems the public funds they have received and to improve transparency in the way port services and infrastructure charges are set. EU member states would also have to ensure that an effective procedure is in place to handle complaints.

To deliver high quality services, the rules include new requirements for port service providers to ensure that employees receive the necessary training, with particular emphasis on health and safety. These training requirements should also be regularly updated to meet the challenges of technological innovation.

The regulation does not impose a specific management model for ports. However, it does lay down conditions if they wish to set minimum requirements for services such as towage, mooring, bunkering and the collection of ship-generated waste, or to restrict the number of providers of these services. For example, ports could limit the number of service providers in order to ensure safety, security and environmental sustainability.

Cargo handling and passenger services will also be subject to financial transparency rules, but are exempted from those on the organisation of port services. Nicolette van der Jagt, Director General of CLECAT said: 'we welcome this final text as a first EU regulation on ports and we should continue to build on it. We welcome the new provisions on financial transparency and port user consultation but we continue to regret the absence of cargo-handling from the greatly-reduced market opening provisions vis-à-vis the Commission proposal.'

The European Sea ports Organisation (ESPO) considers the final text an acceptable compromise, and a 'significant improvement' on the original Commission proposal of May 2013. "

The European Community of Shipowner's Association (ECSA) also welcomes the new regulations, but finds it does not address some existing market access issues shipowners face. ECSA's Secretary General Patrick Verhoeven commented "[…] now that after 15 years of discussions we finally have a first EU law on ports, we see it as a first step towards a genuine motorways of the sea in which ports are key points." He also called upon the Commission to consider the short sea shipping sector in future efforts. Well-performing port services are crucial to this sector as ships make frequent port calls.

The regulation now requires final official approval by the Council of the EU and should apply from 2018.

Sources: [European Parliament](), [European Commission](), [European Sea ports Organisation]() (ESPO), and [European Community of Shipowner's Association]() (ECSA), 14 December

EP TRAN COMMITTEE ADOPTS LOGISTICS REPORT

Last week the European Parliament TRAN Committee adopted the own-initiative report by MEP Ines Ayala Sender with a broad majority. The report calls on the Commission and Member States to make full use of the multimodal TEN-T infrastructure, and better coordinate its development. In the Committee's view, particular action to take should also aim to further reduce regulatory, operational and technical barriers, ensure optimal use of resources, and facilitate the uptake of new technologies, including digital solutions, automated vehicles and drones in freight transport logistics. The Committee highlights the need for a renewed EU strategy on freight logistics in order to tackle competiveness, sustainability and employment challenges in this key sector of the economy. In addition, the Committee calls for measures to help increase the sector's attractiveness for new professionals, and to improve statistical information on intermodal transport and logistics performance. The vote in the Plenary session is scheduled for January.

FOURTH RAILWAY PACKAGE MARKET PILLAR ADOPTED

Earlier this week the European Parliament approved the Market Pillar of the Fourth Railway Package. This green light comes after almost five years of intense negotiations between the Commission, the Parliament and the Council, also involving a vast number of stakeholders. The European Parliament's support of the agreement reached during trialogues on the legislative texts revising Directive 2012/34 (the Governance Directive) and Regulation 1370/2007 (the PSO Regulation) will allow their publication in the EU Official Journal in the coming days.

CLECAT welcomes the agreement as technical pillar of the 4th Railway Package is an important and overall positive step forward for the rail sector, but regrets that the political part remains a compromise postponing further reform in the rail freight sector.

Road

EU HAULIERS TO FOCUS ON NICHE MARKETS TO COMPETE

Low-cost eastern European road hauliers' increasingly firm grip of international transport routes for general cargo is unlikely to be challenged by their counterparts in Western Europe, who should instead focus on consolidating their pre-eminence in niche or specialty markets. That is the view of Yves Fargues, the president of France's leading freight transport and logistics trade body TLF, in an interview with Lloyd's Loading List. Fargues, whose career in the sector spans more than 40 years − including a spell as head of French logistics group GEFCO − is also president of the road freight research and data agency Comité National Routier (CNR).

CNR recently published an EU study highlighting huge disparities in the wage and labour costs relating to the employment of lorry drivers in 15 countries that give eastern bloc hauliers a significant competitive advantage over operators in the west. Fargues believes there is little prospect of the operating cost gap narrowing between hauliers in the east and west, as this would require harmonisation of lorry drivers' pay and conditions and of employer contributions that fall within the realm of fiscal and employment affairs where the EU as yet, at least, has no scope for intervention.

“Today, western EU hauliers need to focus on consolidating their position in niche markets for transport and logistics − such as hazardous goods − where expertise, know-how and core competency and the ability to offer added-value services are pre-requisites, and where there is a need of a strong partnership between 3PLs and shippers,” Fargues said.

Fargues also called on the European Commission to regulate the market for vehicles below 3.5 tons. These vehicles are not regulated by EU transport legislation, but they are increasingly used for these activities resulting in fierce competition.

For the full interview visit Lloyd’s Loading List, 9 December

EUROTUNNEL MORE EXPENSIVE FOR HAULIERS IN 2017

Booming freight traffic has provided scope for Eurotunnel to implement a higher-than-normal annual increase in rates for trucks taking its shuttle service in 2017. From January 2017 new increased tariffs will be applicable for tucks and smaller commercial vehicles. However, the financial impact on road hauliers could be more significant given that Eurotunnel will more than double the number of ‘peak’ traffic days in 2017 on this year when higher rates apply than on ‘normal’ days. A company spokesman told Lloyd's Loading List that there would be an extra 44 ‘peak’ days next year compared to 2016, taking the total to 83 days.

Source: Lloyd’s Loading List, 14 December

EKOL LOGISTICS INVESTS IN MULTIMODAL PORT TERMINAL

Istanbul-headquartered freight transport group Ekol Logistics has further deepened its integrated freight transport infrastructure by acquiring 65% of Europa Multipurpose Terminals in Trieste, Italy, the operator of the port that it uses for its Italian Ro-Ro and unit train services. In addition to Ro-Ro services between Turkey and Trieste, Ekol operates 44 weekly rail freight services between Trieste and Cologne or Ludwigshafen in Germany, and to Ostrava in the Czech Republic. The acquisition by the Turkish multimodal specialist of port infrastructure in Italy adds to the Ro-Ro terminal that the company is building in Yalova, Turkey, due to enter commercial operation next year.

Europa Multipurpose Terminals is one of several intermodal investments by Ekol in 2016 as it attempts to build its freight transport infrastructure in Europe to support its Turkey-Europe freight transport and logistics business. Those intermodal investments by Ekol in 2016 include the launch in October of a weekly rail freight shuttle from the southern French Port of Sète to Noisy-le-Sec in Paris, in partnership with SNCF subsidiary VIIA. That links with the weekly Ro-Ro service from Turkey to France that Ekol launched in 2014, with the capacity of 180 trailers allowing a 48-hour transit time between Izmir and Port of Sète. Other intermodal investments by Ekol in 2016 include the construction of its fourth owned Ro-Ro vessel, due to enter service next year. This will replace a chartered vessel and is in addition to two other chartered Ro-Ro vessels that the company controls. Ekol describes the latest investment in Trieste as part of its “continuing aspirations to achieve sustainable growth through environmentally friendly business processes and projects”.

Full story available here; Lloyd’s Loading List, 12th December 2016

Rail

GOTTHARD TUNNEL OPENS UP EUROPEAN INTERMODAL OPTION

The world's longest and deepest rail tunnel – the Gotthard Base Tunnel, in Switzerland – entered commercial service for both freight and passenger traffic on December 11. Up to 260 freight trains and 65 passenger trains are expected to traverse the two-tube tunnel on a daily basis.

Vaunted as a major link in a pan-European railway corridor stretching from the port of Rotterdam in the north, to Genoa, in the south, the 57 kilometer-long Gotthard Base Tunnel has taken 17 years to build at a cost of over CHF12 billion. Proponents believe the tunnel will significantly enhance rail freight transport through the Alps while also providing additional stimulus to the modal shift, from truck to train, for the shipment of goods. It will also facilitate a new operating concept, based on the European Train Control System (ETCS), which offers greater timetable stability and punctuality, while also providing sufficient capacity for future growth.

Air

HIGH SAFETY CULTURE IN EU SKYS BUT FATIGUED CARGO PILOTS

The London School of Economics and Politics (LSE) and EUROCONTROL recently published a European Safety Survey after having had questioned more than 7,200 pilots. They came to the conclusion that fatigue in the cockpit is a worrying issue and that this is in their view more pronounced among cargo operators and Low Cost Carriers (LCC). However, the study also notes that European aviation generally has a good safety culture compared to other areas throughout the world. The pilots themselves are mostly confident that their flying skills suffice and are also sure that their colleagues in the cockpit are committed to safety.

Source: Cargo Forwarder Global, 12 December , Read the full report here.

NEXTGEN & SESAR – 2ND STATE OF HARMONIZATION REPORT

The EU published the new report on the current state of progress towards achieving the necessary level of harmonization and global interoperability between NextGen and SESAR. The report is an update on current and planned collaboration efforts by the United States and the European Union to harmonize and secure the modernization of air traffic management not just transatlantically but globally in support of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP) and its Aviation System Block Upgrade (ASBU) program.

Significant progress has been made in the areas of transversal activities; information management; trajectory management; communication, navigation, and surveillance (CNS) and airborne interoperability; and collaboration projects.

Read the report here.

Maritime

HMM TO 'GAIN ACCESS TO' 2M NETWORK

Light was finally shed on the mystery of Maersk's long-running talks with Hyundai Merchant Marine Line (HMM), which concluded on Sunday with the announcement of "a new strategic cooperation" between the two lines and Maersk's partner in the 2M network, Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC).

The deal laid to rest repeated forecasts that Maersk would end up buying the financially troubled South Korean line. Instead it was relayed that HMM would co-operate with the 2M lines via a combination of slot exchanges and slot purchases. Maersk Line and MSC will also take over a number of charters and operations of vessels currently chartered to HMM. However, a joint statement affirmed that the deal was "outside the scope of MSC and Maersk Line's 2M vessel sharing agreement", although HMM would have access to the 2M network.

Meanwhile M2 customers have requested assurances from Maersk Line and MSC that their cargo will only be loaded on HMM ships with their permission, fearing supply chain disruptions as a result of disgruntled HMM creditors.

Source: Lloyd's Loading List, 12 December ; and The Load Star, 15 December

AN ETS SCHEME FOR MARITIME TRANSPORT?

On Thursday the ENVI committee backed a report to strengthen the EU carbon market (EU ETS) to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions. MEPs propose to reduce the carbon credits to be auctioned by 2.4% each year, and doubling the capacity of the market stability reserve (MSR) to absorb the excess of allowances on the market.

The report also includes a provision that puts pressure on the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to develop a similar scheme for maritime transport as from 2021. If that is not the case, then shipping will be included in the European ETS as from 2023. Part of the revenues generated from ETS will be channeled through a Maritime Climate Fund to improve energy efficiency and invest in innovative technologies for ports and short sea shipping.

The European Community Shipowners' Association is not happy with this report and finds it undermines the work done at the IMO in October. ECSA Secretary General Patrick Verhoeven said, "We find this very disappointing, but it does not change our resolve to make the IMO roadmap a success. We agree that the shipping sector must further reduce its CO_2 emissions […] But this can only happen effectively in a global context. Threatening with regional measures under unrealistic deadlines is a very counterproductive move."

The European Parliament plenary session will vote on the report in February.

Source: European Parliament and European Community Ship owners' Association, 12 December

Customs

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS IN EP PLENARY ON UCC IMPLEMENTATION

On 15 December 2016, the European Parliament plenary session had an exchange of view with the Commission on the Motion for a Resolution on tackling the challenges of the Union Customs Code implementation which was adopted by the IMCO Committee last week.

Representing the Commission, Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, made in introductory statement during which he thanked the Parliament for the initiative and estimated that the Motion for a Resolution constituted a good summary of the challenges related to UCC implementation. He explained that both the Parliament and the Commission had the same objective: more efficient customs performances, more trade facilitation for legal businesses, full automation of customs processes, interagency cooperation, and greater risk management and controls. Mr Andriukaitis estimated that the EU was in the meantime facing important challenges that needed to be addressed, especially related to the pressure on customs provoked by the expansion of their responsibilities (Intellectual Property Rights, security and safety of citizens, etc.) and the lack of financial resources to achieve the IT modernisation foreseen by the UCC. He added that the Commission was currently reviewing the UCC implementing regulations, a necessary work to be done in order to bridge the gaps identified since the 1st of May at the operational level. Member States and traders (though the TCG) were closely involved in this review. Regarding the future work of the Commission, Mr Andriukaitis explained that a Communication on Governance would be published before the end of the year and would address the need for more cooperation between the Commission and the Member States on UCC implementation. Some focus would be put on cooperation between customs and enforcement & security agencies at national level. An impact assessment would be carried out in the context of the next EU Financial Framework, in order to evaluate the financial resources needed for the achievement of the IT systems related to the UCC implementation.

The Members of the European Parliament unanimously replied that the customs union was far from being achieved. They called the Commission for better harmonisation of the procedures and for ensuring a proper interoperability of the IT systems to be put in place. MEPs reminded that the customs union was a cornerstone of the EU Single Market and must be harmonised to avoid unfair competition between businesses at the European level as well as to increase the European Union competitiveness at the global level. Reality showed that European businesses were not facing the same rules depending on the Member States and that the national IT systems were developed in an isolated way by each Member State. MEPs also underlined that the UCC had been developed in order to provide more simplifications to legal businesses and to implement clear and simple customs rules for SMEs, two crucial goals not reached at this stage. Finally, MEPs estimated that ecommerce should be facilitated as it would become increasingly important in global trade. The EU should not missed the opportunity of contributing to its deployment. In conclusion it was asked to the Commission to adopt a comprehensive approach integrating all the Member States for common understanding of the rules and simplifications to be granted, as well as an aligned development of the IT structures, without which the UCC would not be able to achieve its objectives.

The Motion for a Resolution on tackling the challenges of the UCC implementation will be adopted by the European Parliament during its plenary session of January 2017.

THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE 1ST EU AEO WORKSHOP ARE AVAILABLE

On 13 December 2016, the European Commission published the conclusions of the 1st EU AEO Workshop held in Senec (Slovakia) from November 29 to December 1.

The conclusions include some general statements on the meeting itself but also recommendations for the future and actions to be undertaken by both public authorities and private stakeholders, at European and global levels. Among the objectives to be achieved, the need to ensure a harmonized implementation of the AEO programmes in the world and the need to enhance the benefits related to the AEO status are mentioned.

The conclusions are available here.

CANADA E-MANIFEST REQUIREMENT FOR FREIGHT FORWARDERS

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) has issued a notice regarding the e-Manifest implementation timeline for Freight Forwarders to electronically transmit advance house bill data on consolidated freight to Canada. Effective from November 7, 2016, the e-Manifest House Bill (eHBL) has become mandatory for Freight Forwarders. The general requirements for Freight Forwarders are as follows:

Electronic House bills
Freight forwarders are required to transmit advance house bill data electronically to the CBSA, and the data must be received and validated by the CBSA prior to arrival, within the prescribed mode-specific time frames.

Close Messages
Freight forwarders will also be required to transmit a house bill 'close' message once all house bills within a consolidated shipment have been sent to the CBSA. The Close message establishes the link between the previous Cargo Control Number (CCN) and the lower-level house bills in the chain of cargo control.

8000-Series Carrier Code
Freight forwarders will require a CBSA-issued, 8000-series code (a four-character code that begins with an 8) to transact business with the CBSA, including the advance electronic transmission of house bill / supplementary data. Detailed information on obtaining a CBSA-issued carrier code is available in the Commercial Carriers section of the CBSA Web site.

Sub-Location Codes
A sub-location code (Warehouse Office code) consists of a four-digit identification number where the shipment is to be warehoused for inland release and identifies the location of goods within a sufferance warehouse. Carriers, freight forwarders, and agents must include sufferance warehouse sub-location codes on cargo control documents. Please find YML Carrier/Sub-Location codes for filing as the attached file in the bottom of the notice.

From November 7, 2016, to January 10, 2017, the CBSA will provide freight forwarders with a period of transition during which penalties for non-compliance will not be issued and the CBSA will work closely with freight forwarders on corrective measures.

From January 11, 2017, to July 11, 2017, freight forwarders deemed to be non-compliant with eManifest requirements may be issued zero-rated penalties (non-monetary) under the CBSA's Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS). Beginning July 12, 2017, freight forwarders deemed to be non-compliant with eManifest requirements may be issued monetary AMPS penalties.

Source: BIFA, 14 December
Further information on eManifest implementation is available here.
More information concerning the eManifest for Forwarders requirements available here.

Sustainable Logistics

LEARN WORK PACKAGES 3 & 4 KICK OFF

CLECAT attended the kick-off meeting of Work Packages 3 and 4 of the LEARN project in Leiden on 13 December. The LEARN project will accelerate emissions measurement, reporting and verification, or MRV, that will allow companies to identify reduction actions and track progress. Companies are supported through guidance, training, testing of MRV in real logistics supply chains, and setting research and policy priorities. The project partners will work with a wider network in the development of a blueprint for a label to reward businesses who pro-actively set the standard in improving their logistics efficiency. The LEARN project builds on and seeks to improve the GLEC Framework.

Work Package 3 focuses on developing a research agenda, by establishing the status quo of research into carbon footprinting for logistics chains, identifying gaps and building a basis for future research in this area. In Work Package 4, testing will be carried out with companies including freight forwarders, shippers and carriers to determine the extent to which they are measuring their emissions in line with the GLEC Framework methodology and challenges encountered in doing so. CLECAT will partner with companies to carry out this testing.

NEW EEA REPORT CALLS FOR SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

A European Environment Agency (EEA) report released on 14 December assesses the latest environmental trends in transport and presents examples of the different transitions needed in terms of technology, urban planning and societal behaviour to make transport more sustainable.

The EEA report 'TERM 2016: Transitions towards a more sustainable mobility system' assesses the progress that European Union Member States are making to improve the environmental performance of transport in line with related EU policy targets. The report also looks at the big changes underway in the sector, from emerging technologies such as electric and driverless cars, to recent innovations that are becoming increasingly popular, such as shared or on-demand mobility services for commuters.

It is clear that Europe's environment will continue to face transport-related pressures, such as air pollution, biodiversity fragmentation, traffic congestion, inefficient use of urban space and noise. Transport activity across Europe is expected to continue growing under current trends and policies. From 2010 to 2050, it is estimated that passenger transport will grow by about 40 %, with aviation as the fastest growing sector. Freight transport is expected to grow by 58 %. Consistent with these outlooks, greenhouse gas emissions under current policies are forecast to increase slightly between 2030 and 2050 to 15 % above 1990 levels, significantly higher than the 60 % reduction target proposed for 2050. Reaching Europe's long term environmental targets will therefore still require substantial efforts.

The report stresses that while technological developments will continue to largely determine the future environmental performance of the transport sector, many past beneficial technological advances have historically been offset by the ever increasing demand for transport. Meeting decarbonisation and other environmental goals for the sector requires not only incremental changes such as improvements to the fuel efficiency of road vehicles, planes and ships, but also more far reaching changes, such as the widespread introduction of electric vehicles and changes to lifestyles and habits which greatly influence the way that society uses transport.

Looking to the future, the report identifies the scale of change required, in terms of transport's environmental performance, in order to meet the EU's long-term decarbonisation targets for 2050. It also looks at the strong links and interdependencies between the transport system and the food, land use and tourism sectors. Various barriers and 'lock-ins' that can hold up or delay the shift to a more sustainable mobility system are presented. One clear example of a 'lock-in' is society's continued dependence on the fossil-fuel powered internal combustion engine, coupled with continued investments in traditional road transport infrastructure, which can hamper efforts to shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

Source: European Environment Agency, 14 Decembver

NEW BIG DATA ANALYTICS TOOL TO CREATE 'SHARING ECONOMY'

A tool to help companies substantially improve the efficiency of their shipping operations has been developed by a team of researchers in Belgium. The tool uses Big Data analytics and GPS coordinates to analyse all the transport routes of one or more companies extremely quickly - and look for ways to combine geographically compatible shipments. The algorithm also identifies collect and/or drop-off opportunities, allowing you to pick up an extra load en-route.

Professor Robert Boute of Vlerick Business School, says that with studies showing one in four delivery trucks driving around empty – while those that are not empty are only 57% full, companies can't afford to ignore the issue. "It's not hard to guess the costs incurred by trucks full of air rather than goods. Things can and should be better."

"Bundling, backhauling and round trips are the terms that have given us the name of our algorithm: BBaRT", says Boute. "At the end of the journey, BBaRT provides you with a list of opportunities ranked according to potential cost savings and environmental benefits. The strength of the BBaRT tool is that it can handle data sets of almost any size. […] Our algorithm can give companies the insight they need. There is a lot of talk about big data digital transformation and the sharing economy. BBaRT is an example of what that really means."

Source: BIFA, 14 December
Find out more about BBaRT here.

General

REPORTED CARGO CRIME DOUBLES IN EMEA

The Transported Asset Protection Association (TAPA) is asking stakeholders to share cargo crime intelligence with TAPA's Incident Information Service (IIS) to address the issue of under-reporting of thefts in countries across the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region.

TAPA's call for action comes as its latest data for thefts from supply chains in the region in the third quarter (Q3) of 2016 shows a total of 489 newly recorded losses, more than five a day and up 105.4% year-on-year. Of the reported thefts, only around 5% are from TAPA members "because of the steps they take to protect their products", the association pointed out.

The total loss figure for the 46.8% of crimes reported with an actual value to TAPA's IIS in the three months ended 30 September was almost €19.9 million. This included 28 incidents involving a loss of more than €100,000 and a biggest single loss of €4 million of Jewellery/Precious Metals from a vehicle while en route in Arezzo, Italy, on 11 July. The average loss for crimes with a value in the quarter was €86,828 as TAPA recorded incidents in 25 countries in EMEA.

Also this week the freight insurance and risk management specialist TT Club warned logistics operators and freight forwarders to maintain 'robust due diligence procedures', especially in managing their road freight operations. TT Club said, cargo theft continued to be a constant and evolving threat to the global supply chain, apparently often involving insider knowledge coming from within cargo owners, logistics providers, or their sub-contractors. And several new trends appeared to indicate the participation of some drivers in certain crimes. Particular attention should be given also to designated overnight parking areas, particularly avoiding insecure areas close to the collection or delivery points, the company added.

Source: Lloyd's Loading List (TAPA Cargo crimes and TT Club Cargo crime threats), 12 December

COUNCIL APPROVES THE EU'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2017

On 13 December 2016, the Council approved the EU's legislative priorities for 2017 as agreed beforehand with the European Parliament and the Commission. This will help the three EU institutions to pool their efforts and to ensure substantial progress in fields where they are most needed. A joint declaration setting out the EU priorities will be signed by the Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, the President of the Parliament, Martin Schulz, and the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker later the same day.

"This is the first time that the EU establishes a set of common legislative priorities for the following year. This will allow the EU institutions to work more closely together to tackle the significant challenges which lie ahead", said Mr Miroslav Lajčák, the Slovak Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and President of the Council.

In 2017, the EU will give priority treatment to legislative initiatives in the following policy areas:

- Giving a new boost to jobs, growth and investment through strengthening the European fund for strategic investment, modernising trade defence instruments, improving waste management in a circular economy, making progress on the banking union and on the capital markets union
- Addressing the social dimension of the EU, in particular through enhancing the youth employment initiative, improving social security coordination, allowing easier access of accessible products and services to the market and creating a European solidarity corps
- Better protecting EU citizens' security, in particular through better protecting external borders (via an entry-exit system, smart border and a European travel information authorisation system), stronger rules on buying and possessing firearms, fighting terrorism, money laundering and terrorist financing and information exchange on third country nationals

- Reforming the EU's migration policy in a spirit of responsibility and solidarity, notably through revising the EU's asylum rules and enhancing investments in third countries to address the root causes of migration
- Delivering on a digital single market, in particular through reforming the EU telecoms and copyright rules, allowing the use of the 700 MHz band for mobile services, preventing unjustified geo-blocking, revising the audiovisual media services directive and modernising the common data protection rules
- Building an energy union and a forward looking climate change policy, notably through the implementation of the 2030 climate and energy framework, the follow-up to the Paris agreement and the clean energy for all Europeans package

The Council, Parliament and Commission agreed that progress is also needed in pursuing their commitment to common European values, in the fight against tax fraud, in the preservation of the principle of free movement and in the reinforcement of Europe's contribution to stability, security and peace.

Agreeing top legislative priorities between the Council, the Parliament and the Commission is a first in EU history. It has been introduced by the better law-making agreement signed in April 2016.
Joint declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2017

Source: The European Council, 13 December

PARCEL DELIVERY MARKET FRAGMENTED – EU ACTIONS NEEDED

A report commissioned by the EP Committee in Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) finds that the fragmented parcel delivery market in the EU is a major barrier to cross-border e-commerce and EU actions are necessary. The report is an in depth analysis of the European market for parcel deliveries and evaluates the effectiveness of a recent regulation proposal of the European Commission. The regulation aims to improve cross-border e-commerce in the EU by improving the transparency in the market and controlling competences of national regulatory authorities.

The fragmentation of EU parcel operators is a hindrance to cross-border e-commerce and therefore an obstacle to the Digital Single Market. Fragmentation leads to high cross-border shipping prices, which consumers are often unwilling to pay and will prevent many e-retailers from marketing and taking part in cross-border business. Different standards and regulatory environments across member states add to the complexity of cross-border deliveries.

The report concludes that EU actions are needed and the proposed EC regulation provides effective solutions and should be adopted immediately. Instead of introducing price limits, it is necessary to establish the right market conditions and to promote cross-border delivery services. In addition to accepting the regulation the report also suggests the following actions: support of local government where needed (eg. Rural areas); facilitating cooperation among national regulating authorities; applying regulations also to return solutions (a central aspect of e-commerce); and monitor cross-border shipping fees to improve transparency.

Read the full report here.
Read the EC Regulatory proposal here.

GALILEO IS NOW LIVE

On 15 December 2016, Europe's satellite navigation system Galileo will start offering its initial services to public authorities, businesses and citizens. Galileo is the European Union's Global

Satellite Navigation System (GNSS). Also referred to as "the European GPS", Galileo provides more accurate positioning and timing information for users equipped with Galileo enabled devices such as an in-car navigation systems and mobile phones.

Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič, responsible for the Energy Union, said: "Galileo will increase geo-location precision ten-fold and enable the next generation of location-based technologies; such as autonomous cars, connected devices, or smart city services. Today I call on European entrepreneurs and say: imagine what you can do with Galileo – don't wait, innovate!"

Source: European Commission, 14 December

Forthcoming events

CLECAT MEETINGS

Customs and Indirect Taxation Institute
11 January, Brussels

Maritime Logistics Institute
20 January, Milan

Sustainable Logistics Institute
7 February, Brussels

Road Institute
7 February, Brussels

Supply Chain Security Institute
21 March, Brussels

Air Logistics Institute
21 March, Brussels

EP/COUNCIL MEETINGS

European Parliament
Transport and Tourism Committee
25-26 January, Brussels
27-28 February, Brussels

European Parliament - Plenary Session
16-19 January, Brussels

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council
12-15 February, Brussels
27 February, Brussels
9 June, Brussels
26 June, Brussels

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