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

NEWSLETTER

Issue 43
25 November 2016

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News from Brussels

CALL FOR ACTION ON VECTO EMISSIONS MONITORING

CLECAT, alongside Transport & Environment, the IRU, LeaseEurope, the Nordic Logistics Association and the Alliance for European Logistics, has written to the European Commission expressing concern about the slowing down of the process to introduce the VECTO tool, which is designed to measure, calculate, report and monitor CO_2 emissions and fuel consumption from new heavy goods vehicles.

The VECTO test procedure has been under development since 2010, as a means to ensure the capturing of realistic emissions values based on a range of loads and drive cycles. The data gathered from this testing as part of the type-approval process for new trucks would enable better decision making, logistics planning and emissions reduction.

The deadline for the adoption of VECTO as the EU type approval test procedure for truck CO_2 emissions and fuel consumption was scheduled for autumn 2016. However, lack of progress in a parallel legislative dossier, which will give the Commission the power to introduce VECTO in the type approval framework, has delayed implementation.

The signatories therefore strongly urge the co-legislators to renew their efforts to find an agreement on this in the coming days or weeks and pave the way for the final adoption and implementation of the VECTO test procedure.

The letter also re-iterates the signatories' position that access to VECTO should be opened up to third parties, including freight forwarders and transport buyers, in order to enable trust, verification and properly-informed business decisions. This will ensure sound decision-making for the most efficient and sustainable road logistics.

Road

BULC DEFENDS PLAN TO OVERHAUL ROAD TOLL RULES

Commissioner Bulc spoke recently at a conference by Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), where she said 'Charging is a hot topic. It needs to be fair, it needs to be transparent and it needs to allow equal playing fields.' FIA is lobbying for the European Commission to call off its plans to change road toll rules. National governments should be free to make their own road toll rules, FIA argues. Bulc is expected to propose an overhaul of road toll laws that allow lower charges for vehicles that pollute less, as part of what the Commission calls a 'polluter pays' system. The executive has pushed national governments to get rid of vignette systems that charge drivers based on how much time they spend on roads, and has instead advocated a switch to distance-based tolls. The Commission is under pressure to slash emissions from the transport sector, where they continue to grow. However, in Council there seems to be a consensus that Member States who wish, should continue with a vignette system. Bulc is also expected to propose changes in Spring next year that aim to make electronic toll systems work better to charge vehicles that cross EU borders. "My dream is that I can travel from Portugal to Finland without stopping and being charged for the use of roads," she said.

ESTONIA TO USE ELECTRONIC CONSIGNMENT NOTE: E-CMR

Estonia becomes the eleventh European country to accede to e-CMR (the electronic consignment note) – paving the way for easier and more efficient shipment of goods, facilitating trade and preparing for fully digital road transport operations.

Rules for transporting goods internationally are covered by the United Nations Convention for the carriage of goods, the CMR (Convention relative au contrat de transport international de Marchandises par Route). Transport operators, drivers and those receiving shipments use a CMR consignment note, which contains information about the shipped goods and the transporting and receiving parties. Until recently, CMR notes were only issued in paper form. In February 2008, a protocol was added to the CMR Convention concerning the use of the electronic consignment note. This protocol entered into force on 5th June 2011. Just last month France acceded to e-CMR and other countries that have already joined are Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland.

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON EFSI WITH VP JYRKI KATAINEN

The European Parliament's Transport and Tourism (TRAN) Committee held an exchange of views with Jyrki Katainen, the European Commission's Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and

Competitiveness on 9th November. He discussed with MEPSs the transport-related investments from the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and the fund's proposed extension under the EFSI II proposal.
The Vice-President considered EFSI as an important new tool in addressing the huge investment needs in the transport sector in order to meet an increasing demand for mobility and competitiveness of the EU economy. According to Mr Katainen, EFSI has already triggered €11bn of investments in transport projects with about €2bn financial support from the fund. Overall, a higher volume of transport investments could be achieved than possible by relying on investment support from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) alone, despite the transfers of budgetary resources from CEF when setting up EFSI. Mr Katainen argued that EFSI is delivering well, with 27 Member States having used it so far, and highlighted its proactive approach in bringing together project partners at all levels, with the European Investment Advisory Hub offering technical assistance to public and private projects and the European Investment Project Portal serving as "online speed-dating" between investors and project developers. The latter has attracted international attention and is expected to lower the cost of financing through competition by investors.

Regarding EFSI II, Mr Katainen informed Members that he expects the proposed extension of the fund to mobilise an additional €500m in investments by 2020. In future, investments would be further oriented towards meeting the COP21 targets, focusing on sustainable transport. Mr Katainen acknowledged that often transport infrastructure projects have a rather weak financial standing and cannot be financed under EFSI. Projects could be facilitated, however, by making more use of a blend of grants and financial instruments. For this purpose, €1.1bn from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) financial instruments are transferred to the CEF grant budget for blending under the EFSI II proposal.

Members disapproved of the fact that CEF grants were reallocated to EFSI and warned of further cuts under the proposed EFSI II. Members were also critical about the effectiveness of EFSI in reaching agreed transport policy objectives, especially as private investments are mainly return-driven. Some speakers questioned the geographical distribution of projects so far, and criticised the too high degree of investments in road or airport projects as unsustainable, asking for a list of approved and planned projects including reasoned investment decisions. Members also recalled that investments in transport infrastructure projects, which are of high importance for the European network and cross-border connectivity but cannot attract private investors, will continue to require sufficient allocations for CEF grants.

Mr. Katainen assured Members that in the future COP21 targets will be respected in transport as well as in energy projects, including alternative fuels and electric vehicle charging stations. Vice-President Katainen also encouraged Members to advertise the possibilities of EFSI and the European Investment Advisory Hub to SMEs and regional authorities in their constituencies.
Source: TRAN Committee, 15th November 2016

RHEIN BRIDGE A1 GERMANY - BAN FOR HEAVY VEHICLES

The A1/E37 Rhein Bridge at Leverkusen has been operational for more than 50 years now and construction of a new bridge is necessary. Planning is to begin early next year. Meanwhile a ban on vehicles over 3.5 tons and 2.30 meters wide has been inforce since September 2016, to prevent further damaging the bridge. To ensure compliance authorities have now installed a barrier system that will weigh and measure all vehicles. Vehicles that do not comply will be fined 150. Authorities want to avoid banning the bridge for all trucks, by installing this measuring system. Heavy vehicles are advised to make use of alternative routes along the A46 or the A4 to cross the Rhein river.

A multi-lingual flyer is available here. More information is also available here, in German.

Rail

TRANSEURASIAN RAILWAY CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE

CLECAT participated to the TransEurasian Railway Connections Conference which took part on the 10th of November in Brussels organized by FERRMED. Stakeholders presented opportunities to improve connections between China and the EU. In-depth analysis was given on various aspects, including different commodities, evolution of costs, improvement of haulage modes and environmental constraints. Reference was also made to the development of the Trans-European corridors related to Trans-Siberian traffic including major intermodal terminals expansion, in the EU as well as China. Finally, FERRMED made recommendations for common and enhanced standards for freight transportation, considering harmonization of procedures and unified railway law, long and heavy trains, enlarged loading gauges, rolling stock adaption and open data regarding freight flows. Faster than maritime, cheaper than aviation, rail is a very attractive solution on certain type of products. The European Commission insisted that China and Russia should respect European standards such as procurement rules to allow a mutual and fair exchange with the EU.

Presentations made at the conference are available here.

STATE OF PLAY OF THE TECHNICAL PILLAR, RP

The Technical Pillar of the 4th Railway Package was adopted in May 2016. Member States should transpose the provisions both of the revised Safety Directive (EU 2016/798) and the revised Interoperability Directive (EU 797/2016) in national law by June 2019 (extension can be granted until maximum June 2020). In early November the European Commission held the first meeting of the "Expert Group on the Technical Pillar of the 4th Railway Package". Regulation EU 2016/796 enhances the role of the Agency (ERA) in the Union rail system, i.e. ERA to act as "One-Stop-Shop" for vehicle authorisation and safety certification and to ensure a uniform implementation of EU framework. Practical arrangements for issuing Single Safety Certificates and Vehicle Authorizations will be defined by further implementing acts.

Air

BRUSSELS AIRPORT REBUILDS BRUCARGO

Brussels Airport has presented its 'Strategic Vision 2040', which will enable it to take part in the expected growth in the aviation industry. The programme includes a redesign of the airfreight village Brucargo, a move which is welcomed by Air Cargo Belgium. Brussels Airport wants to prepare for the forecasted annual growth of the global passenger traffic by 3.8% and of cargo by 4.7% by 2040. For Brussels Airport, this would mean 40 million passengers and 925,000 tonnes of cargo, up from 23.5 million and 490,000 t respectively in 2015. In order to make the logistics chain even more efficient and accommodate further growth, Brussels Airport will redesign Brucargo and replace old premises by a more modern energy-efficient infrastructure.

Air Cargo Belgium (ACB) has welcomed the ‘Strategic Vision 2040’. “We are pleased that this clear and ambitious plan has an eye for cargo as well,” says ACB’s Vice-President, Bas van Goch. “This year Brussels Airport was chosen as the best cargo airport in the world for the third time in a row. This was the result of years of hard work and investment in a forward-looking airport,” Bas says.

Source: Cargo Forwarder Global, 23 November

Maritime

HAPAG-LLOYD GETS EC GREEN LIGHT TO COMPLETE UASC MERGER

The European Commission on Wednesday approved the merger between Hapag-Lloyd and UASC – subject to the latter withdrawing from the North Atlantic trade. A Hapag-Lloyd spokesman told The Loadstar the company was “delighted” with the news. With a combined capacity of 1,478,236 teu, the merger will make the new entity the fifth-largest ocean carrier, well ahead of Evergreen, at 991,470 tea, and marginally behind China Cosco Shipping, which has a capacity of 1,572,335 teu.

An EC statement said: “The clearance is conditional on the withdrawal of UASC from a consortium on the trade routes between Northern Europe and North America, where the merged entity would have faced insufficient competitive constraint.” EC Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager added: “European companies rely on container liner shipping services for their transatlantic shipments. It’s very important that the markets remain open.”

Hapag-Lloyd chief executive Mr Habben Jensen estimated that synergy savings from merging the container lines would be $435m a year from 2019. The majority will come from network optimisation and reduced overheads, including the consolidation of corporate and regional headquarters, the rationalisation of country organisations and overhead reductions such as operations, marketing and audit.

Source: The Load Star, 24 October

EMPTY CONTAINER REPOSITIONING COSTS UP TO $20BN A YEAR

Repositioning empty containers costs the shipping industry $15-$20bn a year – up to 8% of a shipping line’s operating costs – according to Boston Consulting Group (BCG). At this week’s Intermodal Europe event in Rotterdam, Johannes Schlingmeier, a consultant at BCG, said the huge number of empty container movements across the globe accounted for 15% of all box movements in the US, 14% in Latin America, 29% in Europe, 16% in the Middle East and 25% in China.

Speaking to The Loadstar, Mr Schlingmeier’s colleague, Christian Roeloffs, said the problem arose from a mixture of structural trade imbalances and liner and network inefficiency, the latter accounts for 33% of repositioning costs. BCG believes these issues can be addressed by increasing transparency between container operators and shippers looking to transport goods through digital interchange platforms. These platforms analyse markets to find empty units, vessel space and slots to link shippers with goods to move to empty containers, and BCG analysis of its own platform [xChange] shows that each interchange saves roughly $200, on average, for both parties.

“Platforms like xChange link people looking for capacity to people with empty containers, much like Airbnb,” said Mr Roeloffs. “The goal of the platform is to supply a mutually beneficial system that has the potential to save $20m a year.”

Source: The Load Star, 18 November

PORTABLE WEIGHING SOLUTION DELIVERS COST SAVINGS

Engineering firm Hy-Dynamix has teamed up with Dynamic Load Monitoring (UK) Ltd (DLM) to build new wireless reporting technology into its portable container weighing solution, the Hy-Weigh. The four-corner hydraulic jack system, launched in May, raises containers in situ, and is now operable in a wide range of high and low temperatures, maintaining an accuracy reading of +/-2%, which is required to satisfy the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Verified Gross Mass (VGM) weighing requirements.

DLM’s load monitoring technology means that the Hy-Weigh can now give a graphical view of a container and load readings at each of its four corners, as well as the total load reading and centre of gravity, in real-time and wirelessly. “It is almost six months since the new SOLAS regulations became law, and we are now starting to understand the cost implications of container weighing,” said Graeme Parkins, Managing Director, Hy-Dynamix.

“The new partnership is an ideal fit for both DLM and Hy-Dynamix; between the two companies we are able to cover all requirements for container weighing from weighing on port vehicles using the DLM Twistlock Load Cell and Container Weighing System, to before they reach the port at freight forwarders using the Hy-Weigh.”, said Martin Halford, Managing Director, DLM. Hy-Dynamix is also launching new products, including G-jacks, a lower cost system for customers who need to weigh grounded containers, and do not require the option to move them around.

“VGM weighing is predominantly being conducted by the ports, with costs ranging from $10 to $200 – albeit with a $20 average,” said Mr Parkins. “At $20 a go, the value of this market suddenly reaches into the billions.” Mr Parkins added that while operating costs understandably varied country-by-country, “blatant profiteering” by some ports was a bitter pill for shippers to swallow, citing prices in Nigeria, Russia and the US of $141, $120 and $200 respectively.

“Perhaps more concerning though, is the variation in weight tolerances,” he added. “Some ports accept 5% over the VGM while others accept just a 2% difference – one speaker even said New Zealand’s was as low as half a percent.” Part of this confusion stemmed from the three-month soft roll-out of the legislation between July and October, and also partially reflected the possible calibration differences in some weighing systems.

Source: Multimodal News, 21 November and The Load Star, 16 November

Customs

CLECAT JOINS EC CENTRALISED CLEARANCE PROJECT GROUP

CLECAT has been nominated to participate to the work of the newly created Project Group on UCC Centralised Clearance Import Design. The Project Group will consist of 12 EU Member States and 4 business organisations/companies, including CLECAT.

The Project Group has a mandate running from December 2016 to March 2017, and will meet between 4 and 6 times during this time period. Its objective is to analyse and define the envisaged project scope and implementation options for centralised clearance, as well as to support the drafting of a draft Business Case document by end of March 2017. The first meeting of the Project Group will take place on the 5th of December.

Sustainable Logistics

EU SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY UNVEILED

The European Commission unveiled on 22 November its new Sustainable Development Strategy, intended to mainstream the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into all areas of EU policy, as well as to reflect on further developing the EU's longer term vision and the focus of sectoral policies after 2020.

With regard to transport and logistics, the strategy therefore demonstrates how existing EU policy instruments such as the Low-Emission Mobility Strategy, Circular Economy Strategy and the Energy Union, as well as the broader implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement, go towards meeting the SDGs relating to climate action, resilient infrastructure, sustainable industrialisation and innovation, and sustainable cities. Existing and new policies should take into account the three pillars of sustainable development, i.e. social, environmental and economic concerns. The Commission will to this effect ensure that its policies are sustainability-assured through its better regulation tools, and will provide as of 2017 regular reporting of the EU's progress towards the implementation of the SDGs.

The strategy therefore sets out the basis for a broad cooperation in holistic approach to sustainable development, and as such sustainable logistics and transport, ensuring that EU actions in this domain are complementary. It notes that the SDGs are a collaborative agenda between all levels of public governments and civil society, signed up by all UN member states and that implementation needs to be taken forward in partnership with all.

Source: European Commission

General

EC REFERS POLAND, CROATIA AND SPAIN TO COURT OF JUSTICE

In the November infringements update the EU Commission has decided to refer Poland, Croatia and Spain to the Court of Justice of the European Union because of non-compliance with EU law for the transport sector. The European Court of Justice will launch proceedings against these countries, which may face a fine.

The Commission referred Poland to the Court of Justice for the incorrect implementation of Council Directive 96/53/EC on maximum weights and dimensions of certain road vehicles. In particular, Poland restricts the freedom to use its road network to certain trucks even if they comply with EU standards. Under the Polish legislation, trucks with a weight per axle exceeding eight tonnes or 10 tonnes must obtain a special permit from the responsible road managers for using secondary roads.

This is the case even if they are loaded in compliance with EU legislation and should, therefore, be allowed to use these roads without applying for additional permits. Many trucks engaged in long distance transport are in this situation. Various administrators are responsible for the issue of such permits, which means for some journeys several permits are necessary. The Commission is of the opinion that this creates a significant burden for hauliers and constitutes an obstacle to the correct functioning of the internal market for transport. After Polish authorities failed to comply with this the Commission has now referred the case to the Court of Justice.

Spain has been referred to the European Court of Justice for not complying with the rules on access to the occupation of road transport operator. Conditions which must be met by undertakings in order to operate in the road transport market are laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009. Road transport operators must have at their disposal one or more vehicles registered in the Member State of establishment. Spanish legislation, however, requires undertakings to have at their disposal at least three vehicles. The Commission considers that this requirement is disproportionate and potentially discriminates against small hauliers, which very often have only one vehicle at their disposal, and are, therefore, excluded from the road transport market. Failure of Spanish authorities to change legislation led to the Commission's referral to the Court of Justice.

Source: European Commission Press release, 17 November

MEPS PAVE WAY FOR VOTE ON EU-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

This week the EU Parliament Plenary Session rejected a request by 89 MEPs to refer the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) for an opinion. Eighty-nine MEPs had questioned whether the free trade deal's investor protection provisions are in line with the right of governments to regulate in order to achieve legitimate public policy aims, such as protecting health, safety or the environment. The referral request was rejected by 419 votes to 258, with 22 abstentions, paving the way for a vote on the CETA agreement itself.

"Our legal experts said that CETA has no effect on our legal framework, on the competencies of the EU or on our constitutional rights. This agreement provides an answer to our concerns regarding globalisation without causing problems for democracy", said rapporteur Daniel Caspary (EPP, DE). The European Parliament's Legal Service found no contradiction between CETA's investment chapter and the EU Treaties when it assessed this issue in June this year.

Source: European Parliament, 23 November

BULC PRESENTS PLANS FOR EUROPEAN DRONE SERVICES MARKET

EU Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc stated on 23 November the intention of making drones part of the European citizens' daily lives by 2019. New common standards will be put in place to create a U-Space: an efficient framework for all individuals and businesses to operate drones at lower levels, up to 150m high. The U-Space will make denser traffic of automated drones operations over longer distances possible, including over cities, and so open the door to a drone service market with huge economic potential. It would be a reliable system guaranteeing easy and fair access for everyone. At the same time it would provide a safe environment, and make privacy and security rules effective. As a first step, the Commission will present a concept on how drone operations should be organised in a U-Space within the next 6 months and start demonstration projects as soon as possible.

For more details see: European Commission

Forthcoming events

CLECAT MEETINGS

Customs and Indirect Taxation Institute
11 January, Brussels

Sustainable Logistic Institute
7 February, Brussels

Road Institute
7 February, Brussels

Supply Chain Security Institute
21 March, Brussels

Air Logistics Institute
21 March, Brussels

OTHER EVENTS WITH CLECAT PARTICIPATION

ICAO Seminar on Innovation in Air Cargo Security Technology
29 November – 2 December, Bonn

5th IRU-EU Road Transport Conference
30 November, Brussels

FEPORT Second Annual Stakeholders' Conference
8 December, Brussels

EP/COUNCIL MEETINGS

European Parliament
Transport and Tourism Committee
5 December, Brussels

Transport Council
1-2 December, Brussels

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