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

NEWSLETTER

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Brussels news

ELP DINNER DEBATE - 'TRANSPORT, TRADE AND BREXIT'

At the fifth European Logistics Platform (ELP) event this year, on the 27th November, 50 EU policymakers and industry stakeholders met to discuss the implications and impact of Brexit on transport and trade. Deal or no deal, transitional period or cliff edge - all scenarios will have an impact on the trade flows and daily transport movements between the EU and UK. The event tried to put words and figures on this impact.

The event was hosted by MEP Dr Andreas Schwab, member of the IMCO Committee and of the ELP advisory board and moderated by Nicolette van der Jagt, ELP Chair. In his introductory remarks, Dr Schwab noted, with reference to the Swiss-German border, how "borders can make life difficult for SME's doing trade and for transport in general. It causes problems when the free movement for people, goods and companies is hampered. Brexit is clearly bad for the economy."

Steve Parker, President of CLECAT, illustrated how true these remarks are by starting to paint a picture on how businesses trading between the EU and UK are already facing challenges without Brexit: changes resulting from the implementation of the Union Customs Code, the need for increased capacity due to increased trade; an increase in more and smaller shipments, particularly due to ecommerce; fraud; security; sector-specific issues (food, environment etc.). And then Brexit is being put on the top of that, commented Mr Parker:

“There will be an impact on the need for more resources, more people, more expertise both on the side of authorities and of industry; a need to upgrade IT systems and to tackle a lack of experience when many traders have to deal for the first time with international trade.” He further stressed that it is not only customs controls which will present a barrier, but also veterinary and phyto-sanitary checks on agriculture and fresh produce. Industry needs a transitional period, and clarity on the new rules and procedures which they will be required to follow after Brexit, as soon as possible.

Pauline Bastidon of the Freight Transport Association (FTA) emphasized that “at least 185,000 traders will need to make customs procedures for the first time in the UK when Brexit kicks in.” Ms Bastidon provided concrete examples of how integrated supply chains could be disrupted, because of the deep interconnections between the UK and EU-27 at production and distribution levels. She also painted a picture of the impact on Channel ports (every additional 2 minutes to process trucks will result in 27 km of queues), on handling of fresh products and on the lack of fallback solutions for road transport. WTO rules do not provide a solution for road haulage and the only readily available mechanism, ECMT permits, would cover less than 5% of UK-EU haulage needs. Her clear message was “do not forget the practical implications of Brexit: solutions can be found with a bit of political will. Industry needs clarity and predictability, as soon as possible.”

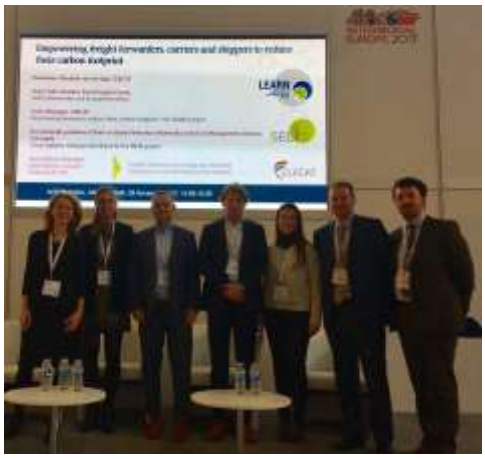
Michiel Vermeiren from the Port of Antwerp noted that the Port is facing uncertainty in the future with potentially less trade; diversion of trade as the UK pursues new sourcing of goods; a possible shift from Ro-Ro to Lo-Lo vessels; potential new services to Ireland; and the impact of a 1525% increase in transaction costs due to customs for the UK. “We expect the largest impact on Ro-Ro operators, with administrative burdens on the handling of the operations and new (non-)tariff barriers.”

As the final speaker, **Roel van ‘t Veld**, policy advisor at the Dutch Customs Administration, confirmed that national authorities also share the concerns expressed by the first speakers representing industry. With UK as one of the Netherlands’ top 5 trading partners, Brexit is clearly a serious matter for Dutch Customs, who are facing a potential increase of 46% in the number of larger traders that need to comply with customs procedures after Brexit. In his conclusion Mr van ‘t Veld stated that “it is our believe that every realistic scenario will have an impact that in some form resembles a hard Brexit – with controls, customs etc.” He also stressed on the need to be aware that there is not only a customs issue: “The level of regulatory divergence will also determine the impact of Brexit. The greater the regulatory divergence, the more need for checks and controls at customs and from other border authorities. We assume that ultimately there will be regulatory divergence. The major impact for Customs and trade will be that for the first time since 1993 the Netherlands will effectively have a “land border”, the ferry from the UK. There will be an impact on the volume of trade being supervised and the procedures to be followed. The key for us all is preparation!”

CLECAT PANEL ON REDUCING CARBON FOOTPRINT

CLECAT organised a panel session on 29 November as part of Intermodal Europe 2017 entitled "Empowering freight forwarders, carriers and shippers to reduce their carbon footprint." CLECAT Director General Nicolette van der Jagt moderated discussions on the benefits of emissions accounting and reporting for logistics companies, which is the subject of the LEARN Project and the GLEC Framework.

The panel event featured presentations of both the LEARN project and the GLEC Framework, discussing how logistics players can be motivated to begin measuring and reducing their emissions, drawing on practical experience in collaborating to measure and reduce logistics emissions. Eszter Toth-Weedon of Smart Freight Centre presented the GLEC Framework, which provides a harmonised methodology for calculation of CO2 emissions along multimodal logistics chains, and actions which can be taken based on the framework to reduce emissions. Aidan Flanagan of CELCAT presented the LEARN project, which aims to build a network to promote logistics emissions accounting and reporting, investigate barriers and problems in its realisation, and test the applicability of the GLEC Framework to real logistics operations.



Rob Zuidwijk of the Rotterdam School of Management presented the SELIS project, which seeks to link business, technology and capacity innovation for collaborative Green Logistics in order to deliver a Shared European Logistics Intelligent Information Space with a clear path towards 30% reduction of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. He discussed collaborative efforts in the supply chain to reduce emissions, and the varying impacts of voluntary and regulatory initiatives for emission reduction.

A panel discussion including Anne Dubost from Heineken, Leon Simons of Connekt and Colin Smith of the Energy Savings Trust covered the challenges for companies with global logistics chains to measure and reduce their emissions, the data which is required in order to do so, and how testing work so far in the LEARN project has examined these questions. CLECAT is a member of the Global Logistics Emissions Council, which has developed the GLEC Framework, and a consortium partner of both the LEARN and SELIS projects.

FEPORT THIRD STAKEHOLDER EVENT ON MARITIME LOGISTICS

On 30 November CLECAT attended FEPORT's annual stakeholder event, entitled 'Maritime logistics chains and the "perfect storm' addressing digitalisation and how this is provoking a move from supply chain models to commodity driven logistics solutions. Speakers discussed the challenges, responses, and opportunities arising from the "Fourth Industrial Revolution", including the development of networks of autonomous vessels, data sharing platforms and the emergence of new disruptive business models. Henrik Hololei, Director General of DG MOVE, discussed the need for Europe to embrace digitalisation and properly harness its benefits for maritime transport and logistics, particularly in facilitating multimodality.

Jens Roemer of a. hartrodt and also a member of the CLECAT maritime logistics institute discussed the advantages of digitalisation for forwarders when acting as carrier towards the shipper, in terms of having the right data to manage the supply chain. Raphael Fabian of Rolls Royce presented the firm's work on autonomous vessels and the need for an efficient onshore logistics chain to complement vessel automation and offer connectivity and higher service quality, while Pavel Telicka MEP called for a review of the EU Maritime Transport Strategy to concentrate on connectivity and the maritime business eco-system.

TRAN HEARING ON MOBILITY PACKAGE

An extensive public hearing on the mobility package took place in the Transport Committee of the European Parliament on 22-23 November. The first part was on the social and market opening issues, and the second on road charging proposals. The hearing heard 13 external experts, including representatives from hauliers' associations, trade unions, NGOs, haulage companies, control bodies, toll system operators, infrastructure operators and academia. The hearing was lively due to the so-called “ping-pong” principle used for the questions and answers sessions, leading to more effective use of time and to a more focussed and content rich debate.

Many topics were raised and discussed during the hearing, including driving and rest times, posting of drivers, cabotage, international transit rules, usage of tachographs and new technology, road charging concepts and enforcement of the rules. Also, more specific answers were sought from the experts on possible measures to be taken in order to address so-called "letterbox companies", the differences in wages and labour conditions in different parts of Europe, the lack of safe and secure parking places and of suitable accommodation, the most appropriate rules on "cabotage", the need and possibilities for a quick rollout of "smart tachographs", the importance of maintaining a properly-functioning internal market in the haulage sector, and the need and possibilities for proper enforcement of the rules.

The second part of the hearing was dedicated to road charging. Members exchanged views with representatives of the sector, NGO’s and representatives of the railway sector. The Rapporteur insisted on the fundamental principles of "polluter pays" and "user pays" as the backbone of charging. In this respect, some Members expressed concern with regard to the exemption of tolls for bus and coaches. There were diverging views regarding the application of discounts for clean vehicles, including electric cars. Why should such an incentive not also apply in the rail sector for electric trains? In order to avoid that part of the traffic would be diverted to rural roads. There were some questions as to whether there should be road charges for all main roads. Members also had questions about the potential economic impact of road charging, in particular for remote regions, and subsidiarity. They made the point that charging should be seen within a more global perspective of vehicle and fuel taxation. There were diverging views expressed on the earmarking of revenues: should these be allocated only to road maintenance, or to compensate environmental costs, or should member States be free to allocate them the general budget of the state?
Source TRAN Newsletter

The position papers of CLECAT on both road charging and market/social issues can be found here

TRAN HEARING ON BREXIT

The TRAN committee of the European Parliament held a public hearing on Wednesday 22 November on the impact of Brexit on road and rail transport. The objective of the hearing was to enable MEPs to understand the impact and the risk that the UK leaving the EU will potentially have on road and rail transport sector.

James Hookham, FTA presented a study on the potential transport delays caused by the introduction of customs declarations due to lack of resources. He underlined the need of an implementation period in order to give certainty to business and to avoid disruption of trade and free movement of goods.
Daniel Kern from IRU explained the different deals that could be achieved between the EU and the UK and pleaded for a frictionless road transport movement guaranteed by a transition period. Moreover, he pleaded for avoiding the establishment of additional red tape and avoiding the introduction of a

quota system. Verona Murphy, President of the Irish Haulage Association, explained the particularities of Ireland and the risks faced by the sector. She highlighted the potential devastating effects that Brexit could have not only on the road transport sector, but in the Irish economy. She explained how Ireland was to suffer the most from Brexit given that it is the only EU country with a land border with the UK.

The lack of certainty, the risk of the establishment of customs controls in the border with Northern Ireland and the instability of the pound was already affecting Irish road hauliers, with 20% of them working on deficit at the moment. Moreover, she noted that the Mobility Package would create greater difficulties for the Irish road transport sector given that the pieces of legislation did not take into account the effect of Brexit. Finally, the three speakers explained that there is no plan B for the sector, and given the legal uncertainty they were trying to put forward contingency plans considering the worst possible option, a no deal departure.

Libor Lochman from the CER spoke about the challenges the rail business may face from Brexit. He stressed several times on the need to avoid a hard Brexit and to reach an agreement and to continue to run businesses without disruptions. He also called for a transitional agreement to give certainty to the industry. Moreover, he called for symmetrical access to the EU and UK markets must be guaranteed to operators from both sides; harmonization of rules and mutual recognition processes in the Single European Rail Area should continue without disruptions; free movement of workers should be maintained to the largest extent possible; seamless border procedures for rail freight travelling between the UK and Ireland should be guaranteed and finally mutual contribution on research and innovation from both sides should be guaranteed by the establishment of appropriate technical, financial and legal arrangements.

Rail

RAIL ALLIANCE CALLS DB NETZ TO TAKE FULL LIABILITY OVER RASTATT INCIDENT

An alliance of European rail bodies composed by the European Rail Freight Association (ERFA), the Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport (UIRR) and the German Netzwerk Europäischer Eisenbahnen (Network of European Railways) published a joint statement stressing that German rail infrastructure manager DB Netz has clear responsibility and full liability for the damages created by the Rastatt landslip incident.

In the referred joint-statement the three rail organizations stressed that a lack of contingency plans and difficult and sometimes nearly impossible diversion routes proposed by DB Netz caused a 'significant damage'. Some of the re-routing options were two to three times longer than the normal route and those diverted routes that went via France or Austria required completely different resources. This lack of contingency plans and disruptive alternative routes forced railway undertakings to incur in extremely high costs to perform ''less than half their normal volume'' as well as having to refuse transport orders by their customers.

Despite welcoming the statement of DB Netz to study and make proposals to avoid any future incident to happen again, the alliance of rail operators have pointed out that efforts should increase in order to tackle the problem of interoperability and the improvement of contingency plans. Moreover, the

three organizations criticized those blaming railway operators for not being flexible enough over the episode, as it diverts attention from the responsibility of DB Netz.

As part of the statement, they proposed a number of measures in order to tackle the problems suffered during the Rastatt incident: From introducing risk management and contingency plans for freight traffic or the creation of reserve capacity, to overcoming language obstacles by introducing a second operational language, amongst others.

On the other hand, DB Netz has published a statement focusing on the lessons learnt from the incident and addressing some of the points raised in the Joint statement of the rail alliance. Moreover, it has stated that all stakeholders have received extensive feedback on the closure of the track. Finally, it has highlighted the setting up of an international incident management system in order to minimise the effects of major disruptions, if they were to happen in the future.

Sources: Railfreight & Joint statement

Customs

UNION CUSTOMS CODE UPDATE

Since entering into force in May 2016, the amendment for Union Customs Code (UCC) is an ongoing process. This is logical because of the extensiveness of the code, the languages it has to be translated into and for the simple fact that once the code is implemented in practise, sometimes issues arise which did not occur in theory. Currently, the review cycle of the UCC Delegated Act (UCC DA) is close to its finalisation. In November DG TAXUD presented the latest update on the UCC DA amendment package. The latest version is currently under consultation. This is expected to be the final version, because agreement was already reached between the DG TAXUD, the Member States and other Commission services. The amendments concern mainly several linguistic or formal legal changes, with little to no impact in practice. Next to the linguistic, translation and formal legal changes, below some of the most significant changes are highlighted.

Definition of exporter (art. 1(19))
After extensive discussions between the Commission, Member States and trade, several months ago an agreement was reached on a new definition of exporter. All involved parties agreed on the proposed text. Unfortunately, de Commission's legal service did not agree with the new text because of a lack of clarity. The intention of DG TAXUD, however, was to create flexibility for parties in the supply chain to determine who is exporter (as long as they are established in the EU, as it was the case with the previous customs code). This is for example to accommodate indirect representation. After several discussions and a few amendments, an agreement was reached and the current proposal, which will be published soon, is expected to be the final version.

Extension of the time-limit for taking a decision on repayment or remission (art. 97)
In this new proposal a third paragraph is added, which provides extra reasons for extending the time-limit for taking a decision on repayment and remission. In short, three situations will be added: a pending similar case before the Court of Justice (not national), verification of proof of origin and consultations on classification. Because all three decisions can be in favour of the economic operator, the amendment will also benefit economic operators and prevent unnecessary court cases. CLECAT

approves of the amendment, but still considers that the newly added reasons should not be misused as reasons to delay repayment or remission.

Approval of a place for the presentation of goods to customs and temporary storage (art. 115) After deliberation with the Commission legal service, the extension of the time limit for declaring goods for a customs procedure or re-export is extended from 24 hours to three days and six days in case of a combination with a location of an authorised consignee. CLECAT welcomes this amendment very much, as it provides more and better flexibility in the logistics processes.

MISSING UCC AMENDMENT: REDUCTION OR WAIVER OF GUARANTEES FOR POTENTIAL CUSTOMS DEBTS

Unfortunately, a very important amendment is missing in the current review cycle of the UCC DA. The reduction or waiver of the guarantees for potential customs debts is essential for any involved actor in trade, but in particular for SME's. Potential customs debts only materialize in very rare situations of non-compliance. The high amount of related guarantees (easily amounting to hundreds of thousands EUR) appear therefore disproportional, potentially excluding many EO's of dealing with customs matters and incurring huge costs for the rest of EO's. Therefore, CLECAT together with several major trade associations sent a letter to the Commission proposing a solution. This was supported by several Member States.

In November a new text was proposed, which is welcomed by CLECAT, because it takes into account some of the main concerns and provides a more realistic approach towards the assessing and granting a reduction or waiver of a guarantee for potential customs debts. However, the opportunity for amending the UCC DA on this point within this review cycle was missed. This could mean any new amendment will only be finalised by the time customs authorities have already re-assessed the guarantees according to the current text, leading to unnecessary burden and different treatment of economic operators across the EU, including distortion of competition and transparency. Therefore, CLECAT and other trade bodies keep insisting on a quick solution.

EXTENSION OF UCC TRANSITIONAL PERIOD FOR IT SYSTEMS

A major goal of the Code is the shift to a complete use of electronic systems for interactions between economic operators and customs authorities, and among customs authorities, and the end of paper-based procedures. The UCC provides in Article 278 that, until the shift to an electronic environment is completed, some transitional measures apply. Essentially, this provision permits the continued use of existing systems until the new, updated or upgraded electronic systems are operational. These transitional arrangements can apply until the end of 2020, at the latest.

2020 has always been considered an ambitious deadline, given the complexity of the task involved in completing seventeen interlinked electronic systems across the whole of the EU. When setting that deadline, it was anticipated that the rules supplementing and implementing the UCC would be adopted very soon after the adoption of the UCC in 2013, so that their provisions could be taken into account in developing the IT systems. However, as it happened, discussions on the supplementing and implementing provisions took longer than expected and the acts were only adopted in their final form in late 2015/early 2016. This led to a delay in producing the technical specifications for the IT systems dealing in one way or another with declarations and notifications.

Since the adoption of the UCC, work is proceeding at an intensive pace on the modelling for the systems but work on data harmonisation in particular has been more challenging than anticipated.

Harmonisation of the data provided by economic operators is crucial for the interoperability of the different UCC electronic systems, for a harmonised application of the legal rules and for cooperation with other public services active at the border. Harmonising the data in line with international data models also ensures better linkages with third countries' IT systems and thus facilitates trade. However, this work involves a lot of investment in terms of time and financial means in fully reprogramming the existing electronic systems.

Therefore, it has become necessary to provide for a later date (2025 at the latest) for full completion of work on some of the systems. This will ensure the smooth implementation by 2020 of the other systems and this will in turn facilitate the later implementation of the remaining systems in proper sequence. Half of the systems for which implementation is to be delayed already exist and are being upgraded under the UCC while the other half are new systems. The postponement of the delivery date for these electronic systems beyond 2020 conflicts with Article 278 of the Union Customs Code, which only allows the use of means for the exchange and storage of information other than the planned electronic systems until 2020.

Because of this reality, the deadline in Article 278 must be extended in respect of the delayed systems. As Member States and businesses need on average two years to plan for each electronic system, the Commission has to provide legal certainty by 2018 about the applicability of the transitional arrangements after 2020 up to 2025 (at the latest) and is therefore proposing an amendment to the UCC. CLECAT fully agrees with this amendment, because it provides a more realistic planning and having good systems is always better than having hastily implemented, faulty systems.

COMMISSION REPORT ON EU EXPORT CONTROLS

Covering 2016, the report points to clear progress in tightening controls on the export of sensitive 'dual-use' products, such as nuclear technology, chemical equipment or high-tech electronics, that can be used for both civilian or military purposes. Exports of such goods are controlled so as to prevent the proliferation of dangerous weapons that could affect international security, be misused for terrorism or cause human rights violations.

In 2016 the Commission made its annual proposal for modernising EU export controls, and updated the EU list of dual-use items to incorporate modifications agreed in the multilateral export control regimes. The report looks at the activities of the Dual-Use Coordination Group, a body made up of Commission and Member State officials. Positive developments include the Group's development of an EU-level IT infrastructure for secure information exchange and its publishing of guidelines to help exporters apply controls. According to the report, in 2015 the value of controlled dual-use exports reached EUR 44 bn, representing 2.5% of total extra-EU exports. The report forms part of the Commission's efforts to enhance transparency and improve firms' compliance and capacity to implement controls set out in its 2014 Communication and in its 2016 proposal.

The Commission has now sent the report to the European Parliament and the Council, both of which are currently examining the Commission's 2016 proposal for modernising EU export controls.

BACHELOR DEGREE CUSTOMS AND TRADE COMPLIANCE

As customs matters have become more and more complex over the past years, the need for higher education in customs has also increased. In order to address this need, a new Bachelor program on Customs and Trade Compliance will start in regular education as of February 2018 in the Netherlands. The program is meant for professionals in both the public and private sector.

In this program, the link between the logistics processes, customs rules and supply chain compliance is the main concept. The students will also develop knowledge in organizational and processes models for international supply chains, from a customs and compliance management perspective. The European Competence Framework for Customs Professionals formed the basis for the education.

A Bachelor degree was the missing link between professional education and the Master in Customs and Supply Chain Management, which started several years ago. The creation of the bachelor program was a cooperation between Dutch Customs, FENEX/TLN (Dutch freight forwarders), evofenedex (Dutch shippers) and the Fontys University of Applied Sciences and was funded by the Dutch Top Sector initiative.

Source: Customs NL inSight

Maritime

MAERSK LINE ACQUIRES HAMBURG SÜD

Yesterday, Maersk Line issued a press release noting that it had closed the transaction between Oetker Group and Maersk Line for Maersk Line's acquisition of Hamburg Süd, the German container line.

On 1 December 2016, Maersk Line announced its intention to acquire Hamburg Süd. The acquisition triggered a regulatory approval process in 23 jurisdictions which was successfully concluded on Tuesday 28 November with the approval of the acquisition by the Korea Fair Trade Commission.

"With the final approval of the acquisition we have reached an important milestone in our strategy to become an integrated transport and logistics company delivering sustainable growth. These are truly exciting times and we are looking forward to taking the first steps forward as one company," says Søren Skou, CEO of A.P. Moller – Maersk.

As part of the conditions established by South Korean regulators it is worth mentioning the withdraw of Hamburg Süd from a vessel sharing agreement (VSA) which operated services between the Caribbean, Central America and the Far East, as well as the withdrawal from the agreement that concerns the route between Far East and the US West Coast.

Source: Shippingwatch Maersk Line

Air

HELSINKI DECLARATION ON DRONES

On 22 November the European Commission, national authorities and the industry adopted the "Helsinki Declaration" aiming to deliver advanced drone operations safely and securely in Europe. This Declaration was adopted at a high-level conference on drones organised jointly by the Commission and the Finnish authorities. It identifies three priority areas for sector-wide cooperation in order to ensure that safe commercial drones operations are up and running by 2019.

Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc said "The Commission is focusing on a clean and quiet, safe and secure development of drones. The months ahead will be crucial, but I am confident that the Helsinki Declaration will give us the necessary impetus. It sets out a clear and common strategy endorsed by the entire sector. Let's now turn words into reality!"

The Helsinki Declaration calls all stakeholders to work in parallel and with maximum cooperation on three pillars, namely legal requirements for drones and drone operations; further investment in demonstrators and in longer term R&D projects that prepare for more autonomous vehicles and more dense traffic; and effective standard setting process that is adapted to the fast-evolving digital technologies of the drone and U-Space market.

Source: European Commission

Sustainable Logistics

STUDY ON LIQUID E-FUELS IN ROAD TRANSPORT

A study published today by consultancy Cerulogy has found that liquid E-fuels made from renewable power are not fit for road transport given its high cost of production and its energy efficiency levels.

E-fuel consists on the conversion of electrons from electricity to liquid form in order to be used in an internal combustion engine. Despite the progress achieved in the production of liquid e-fuel, the study points out that drop-in electrofuel production is not as energy efficient as direct supply of electricity for electric drive vehicles. Moreover, the production costs are likely to be 3.000 EUR/tonne of electrodiesel or even higher in the near future. Therefore, the study concludes that in the near term e-fuels are not suitable for the quest of the EU to decarbonize Europe's road fleet.

Nonetheless, the study is more optimistic with regard to the potential use of e-fuels for aviation. Despite this, the study is cautious and acknowledges that in order to deliver 50% of EU aviation fuel from electrofuels by 2050 would require the equivalent of the EU's total current electricity generation with an investment of some 300 billion EUR for electrofuel production facilities.

Sources: Cerulogy study & Euractiv

EU INVESTS €1 BILLION IN TRANSPORT NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

On 30 November the European Commission proposed to invest €1 billion in 39 transport projects which will unlock a total of €4.5 billion of public and private co-financing. This investment is being made under the Connecting Europe Facility, the EU fund supporting infrastructure networks, and combines - for the first time - EU grants with financing from the European Investment Bank, National Promotional Banks and private banks. The selected projects will upgrade Europe's rail network, further develop alternative fuels infrastructure and pave the way for zero emission water transport. In doing so, the Commission is firmly delivering on its Clean Mobility Package of 8 November.

Proposed projects are concentrated on the strategic sections of Europe's transport network (the core network) to ensure the highest EU added-value and impact. The largest part of the funding will be devoted to developing the European rail network (€719.5 million), decarbonising and upgrading road

transport (€99.6 million), as well as developing maritime ports (€78.9 million) and inland waterways (€44.7 million).

The projects include flagship initiatives such as increasing the speed of the railway access line to the Fehmarnbelt tunnel between Denmark and Germany; upgrading the Divača-Koper railway line in Slovenia to improve its capacity, safety and reliability; deploying a pan-European network of 340 charging stations for electric cars in 13 EU countries; adapting the most important Belgian inland waterway, the Albert canal, for larger freight transport; as well as improving the capacity of the Port of Gdansk in Poland.

As announced in the Clean Mobility Package of 8 November, an additional grant amount of €350 million is being made available for alternative fuels infrastructure, via the CEF Blending call. The deadline for projects submission is 12 April 2018.

The EU Member States represented in the Connecting Europe Facility Coordination Committee must now formally approve the proposed funding decision at their meeting on 12 December 2017. Adoption of the formal Decision by the Commission will follow. The Commission's Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) will then prepare and sign grant agreements with the beneficiaries of the individual projects in the first quarter of 2018.

Source: European Commission

Forthcoming events

GLEC MEETING
6 December, Amsterdam

RAIL FREIGHT DAYS
7 December, Vienna

EUROPEAN PORTS FORUM
11 December, Brussels

CSR EUROPE WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LOGISTICS
12 December, Brussels

ALICE PLENARY MEETING
13 December, Brussels

EP/COUNCIL MEETINGS

European Parliament Transport and Tourism Committee
4 December 2017
11 January 2018

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council
4-5 December, Brussels (Telecommunications & Transport)
18 December 2017

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