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## Brussels News

### HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF MULTIMODALITY

On 26 February, DG MOVE hosted a High-Level Conference, entitled “Multimodal Transport: Towards the Future,” officially closing the 2018 Year of Multimodality. Commissioner Bulc recalled that the primary objective was to promote the functioning of the transport sector as a fully integrated system in order to make better use of existing capacities in all transport modes, thus improving efficiency of the logistics chains. The conference offered an opportunity to summarise the achievements of the Year of Multimodality, discuss the possible gaps in the transport system of the future and address opportunities and new openings for a seamless multimodal transport system.



During the panel sessions, Mr Matthew Baldwin, Deputy Director General of DG MOVE, addressed the lessons learnt during the Year of Multimodality. Ms Magda Kopczynska, Director for Waterborne Transport, addressed disruptive technologies and the opportunities for multimodal transport of the future. There was a clear consensus on the fact that data will be the cornerstone for multimodality, be it for freight or for passenger transport. The lack of

harmonisation and integration was identified by participants as the most important hurdles to multimodality.

The event was closed by the Mr Henrik Hololei, Director of DG MOVE, delivered a closing speech, emphasising that multimodality offers a unique opportunity to rethink our approach. “We need to treat transport as a system rather than a collection of separate modes,” he stressed.

Records of the debate are available [here](#).

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## Brexit

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### CLECAT BREXIT PREPAREDNESS MEETING

On 26 February, CLECAT held its Brexit Preparedness meeting at the World Customs Organization in Brussels. The meeting was organised to exchange views and to inform members about the various procedures to mitigate negative effects of a no-deal Brexit. More than 40 representatives and experts of the freight forwarding, logistics and customs service industry from 15 European countries as well as the national Customs administrations of Belgium, France, Ireland and the Netherlands came together to exchange views and best practices.

The CLECAT Secretariat provided an update on the state of play of the Brexit negotiations and the actions undertaken at EU level for a possible no-deal scenario. Presentations were given by the Customs authorities present and by CLECAT members on the national preparedness efforts, border



procedures and communication activities in the various EU countries. This included the procedures and other preparedness efforts of the most important corridors including Calais, Dover, Dublin, Rotterdam, Zeebrugge and the Eurotunnel.

Human and IT capacity of both the private and public sectors was also an important topic and special attention was given to the increased number of veterinary and phytosanitary checks upon entry into the EU and UK, which still require border checks.

One of the main conclusions of the meeting was that there are certain differences in the preparedness approaches undertaken in France and the UK, especially in terms of procedures and communication concerning transit. Even though the efforts in both countries are much appreciated, smooth border procedures at Calais-Dover and Eurotunnel would require improved coordination and cooperation. In addition, the functioning of IT systems remains worrying. Currently, a lot of Member States are already



coping with regular system failures on a weekly basis. This is of concern since using emergency (paper-based) procedures during a possible no-deal Brexit on 29 March would certainly lead to many problems. The participants in the meeting also considered that preparedness efforts undertaken by companies not used to deal with border procedures, are still very limited. To avoid unnecessary delays at ports, in most cases unprepared companies will be turned away without a possibility to deal with necessary formalities at that location. Another main conclusion of the meeting was that the increased number of safety and security declarations will constitute quite a burden and would require a lot of coordination along the logistic chain. In Ireland, for example, it is expected that the number of declarations will increase from 100,000 to 25 million. The UK has ensured a waiver for these declarations in the first few months, but the EU will still require them.

Despite remaining worries, the main conclusion was that both the professional forwarding and customs industry and the national (customs) administrations have undertaken successful measures to mitigate negative effects of no-deal in the best possible way.

Next week, CLECAT will also take part in a follow-up meeting with European Commission's DG TAXUD. The issues that remain are caused by the possibility of the UK leaving with no deal, which regardless of any preparations will lead to disruption and delays. CLECAT still considers that a no-deal should be prevented. Therefore, CLECAT calls upon negotiators and especially the UK Parliament to close the withdrawal deal as soon as possible. There is no time left for proposals on an alternative withdrawal agreement. Such proposals should have been put on the table when Article 50 was triggered or at the latest half a year ago. Closing the deal would provide the necessary transitional period and an opportunity to start negotiations and preparations for a future relationship, regardless of whether that would be a customs union, trade agreement or any other form of relationship.

## PROVISIONAL AGREEMENT ON POST-BREXIT ROAD CONNECTIVITY

On 26 February, the European Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on the European Commission's [proposal for a Regulation on a set of contingency measures to ensure basic road freight connectivity](#) in case the UK leaves the EU without a formal agreement. This measure is part of the Commission's Brexit Contingency Action Plan, which aims at limiting the most significant damage caused by a possible no-deal scenario.

According to the compromise, the Regulation would allow road haulage operators licensed in the UK to carry goods into the EU temporarily, provided that the UK confers equivalent rights to EU road haulage operators and continues to comply with relevant social and technical rules of the EU. The Regulation would also allow UK hauliers to carry out limited operations within the territory of the EU, decreasing over time. During the first 4 months, two additional operations would be allowed, while only one additional operation would be allowed during the consecutive 3 months, falling to zero additional operations during the remaining time.

Furthermore, the Regulation emphasises that fair competition between UK and European operators would need to be ensured. As such, the Commission would monitor the conditions of competition between the EU and the UK road haulage operators and adopt necessary measures to ensure that those conditions remain equivalent at all times.

In contrast to the original proposal, the start date of the contingency measures would be flexible in case Brexit is delayed. That, however, would not affect the end date and the contingency measures would cease to apply after 31 December 2019.



The text of the provisional agreement is now being finalised with a view to have it agreed by the Member States' Permanent Representatives' Committee (COREPER). It will then need to be formally approved by the European Parliament and the Council, before it can enter into force.

## AGREEMENT ON BASIC AIR CONNECTIVITY

On 27 February, the Council's Permanent Representative Committee (COREPER) endorsed the text of the [provisional agreement](#) that was reached on 19 February between the Romanian Council Presidency and the European Parliament on measures to mitigate the severe disruption to air connectivity in a no-deal Brexit. You will find the endorsed text [here](#).

The agreement enables UK-licensed carriers to provide basic air transport services between the UK and the EU-27 for a limited time. The total seasonal capacity shall not exceed the total number of frequencies operated by those carriers for those services during respectively the IATA winter and summer seasons 2018, *pro rata temporis*, i.e. at the rate for the time.

Moreover, it contains provisions allowing carriers to continue providing scheduled air services on routes subject to public service obligations for seven months, and also allows for cooperative marketing arrangement, such as blocked-space or code-sharing arrangements, as well as for aircraft leasing. Furthermore, it contains a framework for ensuring compliance with the necessary requirements of air carriers holding an operating license issued by an EU Member State, which would otherwise cease to comply with the EU ownership and control requirements due to Brexit, for a period of six months.

The rights will be conditional on equivalence and subject to conditions ensuring fair competition. Where the Commission determines that the rights granted by the UK to Union air carriers are not, *de jure or de facto*, equivalent to those granted to UK carriers, the Commission may take appropriate steps to address the situation.

The proposed Regulation would apply until an air transport agreement with the UK enters into force or until 30 March 2020, whichever comes first. It is important to note that the measures are exceptional in nature and strictly time-limited as they are not intended to replicate the status quo under EU law, but rather to preserve basic connectivity between the EU and the UK.

## AGREEMENT ON SAFE FLYING AFTER BREXIT

On 22 February, the Member States' Representatives in the Council's Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) approved an agreement with the European Parliament on a draft Regulation aimed at ensuring the continued validity of certain aviation safety certificates, which shall ensure a high level of aviation safety in the EU's airspace in the event the UK leaves the EU without a negotiated agreement. The agreed text is available [here](#).

The agreed Regulation covers aviation safety certificates for certain aeronautical products, parts and appliances issued to natural and legal persons having their principal place of business in the UK, as well as certificates issued by providers of aviation training. More specifically, it extends the validity of such certificates for a period of nine months from the date of application of the Regulation (subject to possible prolongation by the Commission). Thereby, operators and EASA shall have sufficient time for EASE to continue issuing the necessary certificates under Article 68 of the Regulation on Common Rules in the Field of Civil Aviation, taking into account the UK's status as a third country.



The Regulation shall apply from the day following that on which the Treaties cease to apply to the UK. However, to allow for the necessary administrative procedures to be carried out as early as possible, certain provisions will apply as from the regulation's entry into force.

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## Road

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### FINAL COMPROMISE ON HDV CO2 EMISSION STANDARDS

Following the provisional agreement on the European Commission's proposal for a Regulation on CO2 emission reduction targets for new heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs), the overall compromise text was agreed by the Member States' Permanent Representatives' Committee (COREPER) on 22 February.

The compromise text, available [here](#), includes provisions for CO2 emission targets for the EU fleet of new HDVs, specific and average specific emissions of a manufacturer, emission credits and debts, penalties for excess emissions, incentives for the uptake of zero- and low-emission vehicles (ZLEVs), verification of the monitoring data and real-world CO2 emissions and energy consumption.

Regarding the following steps, the text now needs to go through the formal approval procedure by the co-legislators. The formal Council adoption is expected in May, while the European Parliament's Plenary vote will possibly take place in mid-March. The Regulation will then be published in the Official Journal of the EU and come into force shortly.

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## Rail

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### EVALUATION OF THE RAIL FREIGHT NETWORK

The European Commission has published an [evaluation and fitness check roadmap](#) on the European rail freight network.

Increasing transport of goods by rail is amongst the priorities of the EU to make transport more sustainable and reduce GHG emissions. Nevertheless, growth of rail freight at international level is held back by its lack of competitiveness. The Commission considers improving the quality of rail freight in terms of commercial speed, punctuality and reliability as crucial to address this shortcoming. Therefore, the Commission decided to evaluate the [Regulation establishing Rail Freight Corridors](#) (RFCs) across Europe.

In its evaluation, the Commission will assess the implementation and impacts of the RFC Regulation on the transport of goods by rail, covering the period from the Regulation's entry into force until 2019, in relation to all provisions of the Regulation. In that regard, it will assess the effects of the Regulation at the level of the individual RFCs, as well as at the level of the entire RFC network. The evaluation will also take into account activities of the rail sector which contribute to the objectives of the Regulation, such as actions to implement the commitments of Member States and the rail sector in the 2016 Rotterdam Ministerial Declaration and the Sector Statement.

The roadmap is open for feedback until 28 March 2019. The Commission will take the comments into account for the further development of the consultation. The Commission intends to carry out a public



consultation of 12 weeks, which is planned for the second quarter of 2019, as well as targeted consultation activities tailored for particular stakeholder groups, discussions in the executive board meetings of the RFCs and the Single European Rail Area Committee.

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## Air

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### TIACA LAUNCHES CARGO SERVICE QUALITY TOOL

This week, the International Air Cargo Association (TIACA) officially launched its Cargo Service Quality (CSQ) online tool following a successful pilot period in 2018 involving 179 freight forwarders and 18 cargo terminals. The programme aims at improving visibility and facilitating new air cargo standards.

The online tool is a new worldwide campaign by TIACA to set global benchmarking standards for the air freight industry to adopt, which shall lead to an enhancement of quality across the chain. It consists of four parts: Benchmarking, Assessment, Improvement and Excellence. It allows participating cargo terminals to provide ratings on several factors including amongst others process, technology, facilities, regulators and general airport infrastructure. [According to TIACA](#), the collected data will offer airports and cargo terminals business insight which can be used to identify areas of improvement and guide their investment decisions. This April, TIACA is planning a 'production live assessment' to demonstrate the CSQ to the global cargo community.

Following last year's pilot phase, the Airports Authority of Kenya plans to fully adopt the CSQ by mid-2019 at all airports across the country, marking the first nationwide implementation of the assessment tool. According to TIACA, there are currently talks with dozens of air cargo supply chain companies from Europe, Africa, Asia and North America who are interested in signing up for the programme.

### EC APPROVES RESTRUCTURING AID BY ITALY TO AERDORICA

On 22 February, the European Commission approved under EU State aid rules Italian plans to grant restructuring aid of €25 million to Aerdorica S.p.A., the operator of "Aeroporto delle Marche" in Ancona, Italy. Aerdorica provides services to passengers, airlines, cargo, business partners and to all operators using the airport facilities. It is currently undergoing insolvency proceedings before the national court. Following rescue aid approved by the Commission in [June 2017](#), Italy notified to the Commission its plans to grant restructuring aid to Aerdorica. More information will become available on the public case register of the European Commission's competition website under the case number [SA.49901](#).

Source: [European Commission](#)

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## Sustainability

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### EU MS SUBMIT DRAFT NATIONAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLANS

According to the Governance of the Energy Union and EU climate action rules, EU Member States were required to develop draft integrated national energy and climate plans (NECPs) for the period



2021 to 2030 and submit them to the European Commission by the end of 2018, with a view to having the final plans developed by 31 December 2019.

Now that all the drafts have been submitted, they are currently undergoing the Commission's assessment. If an individual country's draft NECP and its objectives, policies and measures do not sufficiently or not consistently contribute to reaching the Energy Union's objectives, or if the EU collectively does not make sufficient progress towards these objectives, the Commission may issue recommendations to countries by 30 June 2019 to amend the draft NECP. Member States will then have until the end of 2019 to submit their final NECPs.

A full list of the Member States' draft NECPs can be found [here](#).

## 2030 STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE INLAND TRANSPORT

On 22 February, the 81<sup>st</sup> Plenary session of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)'s Inland Transport Committee (ITC) took place, where consensus was reached on a 2030 Strategy for Sustainable Inland Transport.

The new Strategy is based on four pillars, which are meant to harmonise inland transport developments worldwide and contribute to safe and sustainable mobility. These key elements include promoting and maintaining the UN Transport Conventions, many of which promote safety and high standards globally. The Strategy also supports the development of new technologies and innovations in transport with universal standards so that vehicles can operate internationally, and standards are set for technical advancement to move forward cooperatively. Furthermore, the Strategy focuses on promoting interregional and global inland transport policy dialogues, which the ITC has been the key platform for over the last seven decades. Eventually, the Strategy promotes sustainable regional and interregional inland transport that is interconnected and allows greater mobility.

The Strategy will be made publicly available on the website of UNECE in the coming days.

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# *Digitalisation*

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## BELARUS RATIFIES E-CMR UN PROTOCOL

Belarus is now officially the 19<sup>th</sup> country that has ratified the e-CMR UN Protocol, following Finland, which signed the protocol in January. Ratification of the e-CMR protocol allows the transport industry to drive paperless and support paperless cross-border operation by using the digital replacement.

In the meantime, Spain has passed legislation to allow digital consignment notes from certified platforms for domestic road transport. Furthermore, Romania signed in January the decree to approve the law for additional e-CMR protocol.

The e-CMR protocol entered into force on 5 June 2011. To date, the countries that ratified are Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Iran, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey.



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# Customs and Trade

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## WCO FINALIZES A COMPREHENSIVE E-COMMERCE PACKAGE

During its fifth and final meeting, that was held between 18-22 February in Brussels, the WCO Working Group on E-Commerce (WGEC) concluded the work on a comprehensive E-Commerce Package. WCO Members, working in close cooperation with other relevant government agencies and stakeholders, carried out further work and finalized the supplementing documents to [the Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce](#) that was already adopted by the WCO Council in June 2018. The Framework of Standards sets out 15 global standards providing guidance for governments, the private sector and other stakeholders for effective management of global E-Commerce trade.

The WGEC reviewed and approved a number of documents designed to enrich the Framework and provide further guidance for its implementation. The documents include the Definitions, Technical Specifications, Reference Data, examples of E-Commerce Flow Charts, Revenue Collection Approaches and E-Commerce Business Models. The delegates also approved the Implementation Strategy, Action Plan and Capacity Building Mechanism aimed at contributing to more harmonized and effective implementation of the Framework of Standards.

The supplementing documents will be now submitted to the Permanent Technical Committee and the Enforcement Committee in March, the Capacity Building Committee in April, and finally the Policy Commission and Council in June, for further consideration and final adoption.

Source: [World Customs Organization](#)

## EU AND NEW ZEALAND COMPLETE THIRD ROUND OF TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

The third round of negotiations between the EU and New Zealand on a comprehensive and ambitious trade agreement was held between 18-22 February in Brussels.

The negotiations covered all areas of the future agreement as well as a discussion on the respective market access offers for goods. In most cases, the discussions were based on text proposals submitted by the EU. The next round is planned to take place in New Zealand in May.

A report on the results of the third round will be published on the [Commissions' website](#) shortly together with the text proposals submitted by the EU.

Source: [European Commission](#)

## UN GLOBAL SURVEY ON TRADE FACILITATION

The United Nations Regional Commissions, including ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA, are conducting the third Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation (formerly the Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation) to collect relevant data and information from their respective Member States. The initiative will support the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, as well as emerging regional and global initiatives on paperless



trade or e-trade, such as the recent Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.

The Survey will lead to the production of a Global Report and five Regional Reports, as well as new data entry for the [Interactive Database of Global Survey](#), which aim at providing insightful information for policy makers to harness trade as a key means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is envisaged that, whenever possible, the Reports will be presented at key events of international deliberation and policymaking, including the [Aid for Trade Global Review](#), 3-5 July 2019 at the WTO, Geneva.

The Survey for 2019 is available [online](#). Stakeholders involved in trade facilitation are encouraged to complete the survey or forward the survey to relevant experts.

The UNECE Regional Report and the Global Reports for 2017 and 2015 are available at the link below. In addition, an interactive database of the results of the 2017 survey is also available at [untfsurvey.org](#).

Source: [UN/ECE](#)

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## *Forthcoming events*

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### CLECAT MEETINGS

#### Maritime Institute meeting

11 April, Antwerp, Belgium

#### Air/Security Institute meeting

17 April, Schiphol Airport, The Netherlands

#### Board/General Assembly

26 June, Paris, France

### OTHER EVENTS WITH CLECAT PARTICIPATION

#### IRU European Road Transport Conference

6 March, Brussels

#### ECSA Seminar on Shipping Priorities for 2019

7 March, Brussels

#### ESC Maritime Day 2019

20 March, Rotterdam

#### SITL Conference – LEARN Workshop for Freight Forwarders and Shippers

26 March, Paris

#### Zolltag Spedlogswiss

28 March, Switzerland



FIATA HQ meeting

27-29 March, Zurich

ACEA Workshop on High Capacity Road Transport

7 May, Brussels

## EP/COUNCIL MEETINGS

European Parliament TRAN Committee

4 March, Brussels

18 March, Brussels

European Parliament Plenary

11-14 March, Strasbourg

European Transport Council

4 March, Brussels

7 March, Brussels

European Council

21-22 March, Brussels

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