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Brussels News

FREIGHT FORWARDERS FORUM 2019 – REGISTRATION OPEN

CLECAT’s annual Freight Forwarders Forum entitled **“Logistics for Europe”** will take place on the 14th November at the Residence Palace in Brussels.

This year’s Freight Forwarders Forum brings logistics industry representatives and European law makers together in a constructive dialogue on the future of freight transport. The Forum will address new and outstanding questions:



- How to move forward in completing the internal market to ensure the EU remains a competitive place for logistics?
- Should the EU take more action in support of digital solutions? Is the private sector by itself able to set and implement standards or does it require help from authorities?

- How can the EU guarantee workable legislation in road transport whilst supporting increased efficiencies?
- How to handle growing freight transport needs whilst reducing emissions? How can smart solutions support the climate objectives in the era of the Green deal?

More information is available at the [CLECAT conference webpage](#). The outline of the programme is available [here](#). The conference is free to register and attend. If you are interested in joining, please register [here](#).

DIGITAL TRANSPORT DAYS 2019

From 7 to 9 October, the European Commission's DG MOVE in cooperation with the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union organised the [2019 Digital Transport Days](#) in Helsinki. Almost 1000 officials and experts in the field of logistics, transport and digitalisation gathered at the event.

At the event, questions were addressed like what is the key to making data available in a reusable format, how will the move to digital freight look, where can technologies such as 5G, AI, IoT, big data and blockchain enable innovative solutions, will the societal impact always be positive and can digitalisation really contribute to decarbonisation. These are just some of the questions that were addressed over the three days, during 2 plenary and 24 parallel sessions. Participants were also able to attend side events, such as the Maas (mobility as a service) Summit and the Shift2Rail Dialogue.

CLECAT's senior manager, Dominique Willems, spoke at sessions and participated in debates. Also other representatives of the logistics and freight forwarding industry addressed the audience and presented their views. The session on electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) was one of the best attended sessions and provided a lively debate. All parties present concluded that the eFTI Regulation, which obliges authorities to accept freight transport information in a digital format and establishes a common EU data model and harmonised interfaces, is necessary and one of the main building blocks for future proof digital transport in Europe.



During the Digital Transport Days, the plenary meeting was held of the Digital Transport and Logistics Forum (DTLF). The DTLF is a formal Commission expert group which advises the Commission in the development and implementation of the EU's activities and programmes aimed at the digitalisation of transport and logistics. Subgroup 1 of the DTLF, for which Dominique Willems was appointed as rapporteur earlier this year, is tasked with advising and assisting DG MOVE in the creation and implementation of the eFTI Regulation. At the plenary meeting, the proposed workplan was accepted, meaning that work can formally start, even though work on, for example, the data model has already started and therefore the DTLF is ahead of schedule. The Regulation is expected to be adopted later this year. To the Finnish Presidency, the eFTI Regulation is one of their key legislative initiatives and they are keen to move forward with the adoption during their presidency.

The next edition of the Digital Transport Days will be held in October 2020 in Passau, Germany.



ELP EVENT 'LOGISTICS IN TRANSITION'

At the first Forum organized by the European Logistics Platform (ELP) under the new term of the European Parliament at the Residence Palace in Brussels, entitled '**Logistics in Transition: how to handle growing freight transport and the challenges ahead**', more than 80 EU policymakers and industry stakeholders came together to discuss the challenges facing the logistics sector, ranging from digital transformation to sustainability, infrastructure and access to skills.



**European
Logistics
Platform**

In the keynote presentation, **Professor Alan McKinnon**, Professor of Logistics in the Kühne Logistics University, presented the mega-trends affecting logistics, from sustainability in the supply chain to logistics skills shortages and the rise of e-commerce and demand chains. He warned that the estimated growth in freight and the lack of progress in cutting CO2 emissions to date means that there is real urgency to increase the decarbonisation efforts in the logistics sector. He cited an OECD/ITF report, which found that, even if all global transport cuts are implemented, sector CO2 levels in 2030 would still be the same as in 2015, despite the need to decrease them drastically. Prof. McKinnon suggested that due to current emission trends and the need to stay within tight carbon budgets, restricting the level of freight movement may have to be considered. Other freight decarbonisation measures include shifting freight to lower carbon modes, improving vehicle loading, increasing energy efficiency and switching to low-carbon energy.

The second challenge Prof. McKinnon covered during his keynote speech was the skills shortage in logistics, a problem which does not only affect the logistics sector in Europe, but in many countries around the world. While automation is going to have a big impact on the sector, it will remain a large employer. He also talked about the need to invest in upgrading the skills of the existing workforce.

During the following panel discussion, industry representatives, including **Leigh Pomlett**, Executive Director of CEVA, **Bart Vandewaetere**, Head of Corporate Communications and Government Relations for Nestlé, and **Helder Velho**, Director for EU Transportation Services at Amazon, debated ways of approaching the challenges of logistics.

There was in general a strong recognition from industry on the responsibility to make change and to invest more in decarbonisation efforts, not least recognising that sustainability is top of the agenda for customers. The focus should not only be on the energy performance of vehicles, but on all parts of logistics, including warehousing operations. Industry participants suggested that regulators should invest in the supporting infrastructure (e.g. to make further electrification of freight sustainable) and to allow for much-needed innovation in the sector. At the same time, the development of multimodal transport and the shift to a more collaborative approach with all the actors in the supply chain are needed to improve efficiencies. With this, continued learning remains vital, and supporting skills and education of workers should not be ignored. Regarding the necessary skillset, industry speakers agreed that the demographic problem cannot be solved solely through automation. It was highlighted that the acceleration of automation will require a different skillset. Therefore, improving the attractiveness of the industry as a potential employer, especially for young professionals, remains a key challenge.

Edoardo Turano, Deputy Head of the Road Transport Unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA), highlighted the importance of the transport sector in the context of the broader transition towards climate neutrality by 2050. He emphasised that collaboration between governments and the private sector is essential to accelerate the needed



decarbonisation of transport. At the same time, he underlined that the challenge of transport decarbonisation offers important opportunities of increasing Europe's competitiveness, investing in innovation and clean technologies. He highlighted that there is no single solution for transport decarbonisation, but instead, a combination of different approaches is of the essence.

Sandro Santamato, Head of Unit at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) in charge of Maritime Transport and Logistics, spoke on digitalisation and how sharing data and information can increase efficiency. He referred to the importance of creating a trusted environment for information sharing between the various actors involved in transport and logistics. Digitalisation and automation could also generate demand for more qualified jobs and increase the attractiveness of the sector. He noted that the industry's input is important to determine how value can be added from the EU institutions. The shift towards multimodality was also confirmed to be among the Commission's priorities, as well as digitalisation and the integration of environmental and climate objectives in the future EU research and innovation agenda.

Finally, the Members of the European Parliament, including **MEP Andris Ameriks**, **MEP Vera Tax** and **MEP Boguslaw Liberadzki**, responded to the challenges raised by the industry. MEP Liberadzki reminded the audience on the need to be on board and to invest in order to meet decarbonisation targets, as awareness on the 'green deal' was much bigger today than it was 10 years ago. He also insisted on the need to ensure that EU rules support industry competitiveness and not stifle it. MEP Vera Tax welcomed the fact that industry supports the need to decarbonise and invited industry to suggest ways of achieving the EU targets and to indicate priorities for investment and R&D. She also highlighted that the European Commission could help supporting the emergence of a better gender balance in logistics. MEP Ameriks argued that in light of the EU's target to reduce emissions, policymakers should stay in close contact and cooperate with representatives from the industry to determine the appropriate way for investments to reduce emissions.

The press release is available [here](#).

NEW ROMANIAN CANDIDATES FOR EU TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER

Following the European Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee's double-rejection of the Romanian candidate, Ms Rovana Plumb, for the position of EU Transport Commissioner, the Romanian Government has tabled new suggestions and proposed the current MEP Dan Nica and, as a reserve, the Secretary of State for EU Affairs, Melania-Gabriela Ciot.

The first pick of the Romanian Government, Mr Dan Nica, was actually put forward for the Transport Commissioner's role alongside Ms Plumb, but Commission President-elect von der Leyen picked Ms Plumb. Mr Nica is a second-term MEP from the governing Social Democrats (PSD), Member of the EP's Industry, Research and Energy Committee and a Substitute Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Formerly, he was a Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Communications and Internal Affairs of Romania. However, Mr Nica has no proven experience in transport and might encounter difficulties as he has faced public procurement-related accusations in the past but the time for liability expired.

Given the Commission President-elect von der Leyen's demand to ensure the gender balance in the new Commission, Romania has also put forward the nomination of Ms Melania-Gabriela Ciot as an alternative candidate. She is currently the Secretary of State for European Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, the position she has held for the past two years. Her official biography can be found [here](#).



Ms Von der Leyen has not yet accepted the nominations, considering the uncertainty about the parliamentary vote of no-confidence in the current Romanian Government. Having taken place on 10 October, the vote resulted in ousting the Social Democrat Government of Romania. The interim Prime Minister will now have to be appointed by the President of the country. The choice of the new candidate(s) for the EU Transport Commissioner will depend on the appointee.

It is theoretically possible that Ms Von der Leyen might switch the portfolios with Hungary, whose candidate was also rejected by the EP's Legal Affairs Committee last week. In this case, Hungary would get a transport portfolio and Romania – enlargement.

Brexit

NEW FUNDING TO SUPPORT UK BUSINESS FOR BREXIT

Following the recent [£16 million investment](#) to provide funding towards training and IT costs for businesses that complete customs declarations, the UK government announced that it will provide a [further £10 million in grants for customs agents and intermediaries](#) to build capacity in managing customs declarations. The new wave of grants has been developed to directly respond to industry feedback on what is needed to help build capacity ahead of, or after, Brexit on 31 October, alongside the additional training and IT support already available.

The further £10 million in grants is open to businesses based in, or with a branch in, the UK, that currently complete customs declarations for importers and exporters (customs brokers and freight forwarders). They are available to support costs of hiring staff, including £3,000 for recruitment costs, and up to £10,000 for salary costs, to help build business capacity.

Businesses are encouraged to apply early, as applications will close once all the funding has been allocated, and by 31 January 2020 at the latest. Those that applied for the first and second wave may apply again as part of this new wave of grants. PwC is administering the grants as an accredited grant administrator. Businesses that want to apply for funding can [apply online](#).

UK NO-DEAL BREXIT PREPAREDNESS

As the UK continues its no-deal Brexit preparedness, the UK Government published a [No-Deal Readiness Report](#) setting out what will change if the UK leaves the EU without a deal and outlines what the UK is doing to get ready for Brexit on 31 October. The Government also published various no-deal Brexit preparedness guidance notices including:

- [Moving excise goods from Northern Ireland to Ireland in a no-deal Brexit;](#)
- [Moving excise goods from Ireland to Northern Ireland in a no-deal Brexit;](#)
- [Importing excise goods from the EU in a no-deal Brexit;](#)
- [Exporting excise goods to the EU in a no-deal Brexit;](#)
- [Importing horses if there's a no-deal Brexit;](#)
- [Flowchart for importing livestock and poultry from the EU to the UK;](#)
- [Flowchart for importing meat and dairy from the EU;](#)
- [Claim VAT refunds after Brexit if you're an EU business.](#)



In addition, the UK Government further updated:

- [Using customs procedures in a no-deal Brexit](#);
- [Information videos for traders in a no-deal Brexit](#);
- [Import goods using transitional simplified procedures in a no-deal Brexit](#);
- [Get your EU business ready for Brexit](#);
- [Letters on no deal Brexit advice for businesses trading with the EU](#);
- [Letters on no deal Brexit advice for businesses trading with the EU and/or the rest of the world](#).

As part of its preparations for exiting the EU, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) issued [EU Exit guidance for agri-food stakeholders](#) to ensure that businesses are aware of forthcoming changes and ready for Brexit. The guidance includes events, webinars and documents describing steps that agri-food businesses need to undertake to be ready. The UK's new notification system for importing animals and animal products (IPAFFS) also [opened for registrations](#). IPAFFS will replace the EU's TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System) after Brexit.

In addition, the UK Government [announced](#) on 8 October adjustments to the [UK's temporary tariff regime](#) in case of no deal. Under the temporary tariff, 88% of total imports to the UK by value would be eligible for tariff free access. The regime would apply for up to 12 months while a full consultation on a permanent approach to tariffs is undertaken from January.

Earlier this month, the UK Government also put forward to the EU a [proposal for a new Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland](#). Despite reservations from the EU side, negotiations are still ongoing. Nonetheless, as there is no certainty what the results of the discussions will be, it is important to remain prepared for any possible Brexit outcome.

In light of the large number of notices published by the UK Government, CLECAT advises its Members to subscribe to the [UK Government's website](#) to receive updates by email and remain informed.

Road

FIRST ROUND OF TRILOGUES ON MP1

On 3 October, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission conducted the first round of trilogue negotiations on the social and market aspects of the 1st Mobility Package. While the negotiators agreed on the approach, the content will only be discussed in November.

Last week, the newly-elected EP's Transport Committee gave a green light to enter into the inter-institutional negotiations on the basis of the EP's positions adopted in the previous legislative period, while the official position of the Council stands as adopted in December 2018.



During the first trilogue meeting, the negotiators agreed to start with those dossiers, where the positions are similar, namely the posting of workers in the road transport sector. The rapporteurs



expressed their willingness to find a balanced compromise between the institutions, an ambition shared by the Commission. “The first trilogue shows clear commitments from all three EU institutions to find a common solution to outstanding issues as soon as possible,” said the current EU Commissioner for Transport, Ms Violeta Bulc.

The next trilogue is envisaged for 4-5 November, with a view to start examining the content of the files. There are expectations for the negotiations to be completed under the Finnish Presidency, i.e. before the end of 2019. However, the negotiations, just as the whole process up to this point, will not be easy, especially due to a great resistance from the Central/Eastern Member states. According to a socialist MEP from Bulgaria, Mr Peter Vitanov, Bulgaria will likely seek the cancellation of part of the Mobility Package before the EU Court of Justice if no compromise is reached on the most contentious issues, such as the mandatory return of trucks to the country of establishment.

EUROPEAN TRANSPORT FORUM



On 8 October, CLECAT attended the annual European Transport Forum, organised in Brussels. This year, the Forum focused on making infrastructure fit for the clean vehicle revolution in the EU. Speakers included the industry representatives of energy supply, charging infrastructure, heavy-duty vehicle manufacturing and trucking sectors, as well as the European Commission and the European Investment Bank.

Setting the scene for discussion, the Forum considered that, after ambitious CO2 emission reduction targets for on-road vehicles, the upcoming revision of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive will need to ensure that EU transport networks are equipped and ready to welcome increased numbers of low- and zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles across Europe in the coming years.

Opening the event, Mr Stenqvist from the Volvo Group argued that in five to ten years, building infrastructure for LNG as well as charging stations for HDVs along European motorways will be likely scenarios. In addition, he highlighted that the combustion engine is being gradually phased out. In this regard, Mr Stenqvist stated that there has to be a political will and that policy makers need to propose legislation in order to secure long-term solutions. Furthermore, he argued in favour of longer and heavier vehicles in the EU as they are key to achieving ambitious EU decarbonisation objectives.

During the panel debate, Mr Alex Volkery from DG MOVE remarked that emission reductions have to come from all sources and transport modes, but the problem of quality and quantity of alternative fuels, as well as the deployment of respective infrastructure, must be addressed together with the relevant stakeholder groups. He noted that the European Commission will continue pursuing a technology-neutral approach to alternative low-emission vehicle energies, as different use cases require different energy technologies. Panellists agreed that no single technology – electricity, hydrogen or gas – will win the green mobility race. Instead, a myriad of solutions must be available for road transport operations, ensuring a diversified energy mix.

Although the different fuel and vehicle technologies already exist, the pricing of those technologies is not yet at the right point, said Mr Johan Peeters representing ABB. As such, the financial support is needed at the beginning to accelerate the market uptake of clean fuels and vehicles in terms of both



demand and supply. According to Mr Ovarith Troeung from Engie, users should be compensated in order to encourage consumer acceptance of new, cleaner technologies.

The infrastructure for long-haul trucking will play a more important role in the future than it did before, acknowledged Mr Volkery. However, it must be excelled significantly to meet the future needs of the transport industry in a sustainable manner, panellists agreed.

Rail

EU INVESTS €880 MILLION TO IMPROVE POLISH RAILWAY SYSTEM

On 4 October, the European Commission adopted two Cohesion Policy projects, aimed at improving the Polish rail network and increasing its capacity, speed and safety. Both projects should be operational as of January 2023 and shall promote railway as a clean and competitive transport mode in the country.

The EU-funded works will modernise a 214.5 km section of the railway corridor between the towns of Chorzów Batory and Zduńska Wola Karsznice, between the regions of Śląskie and Łódzkie, on the TEN-T Network. This €838 million investment shall improve services for both freight and passengers.

The project includes replacing the track surface and reinforcing the ground underneath it, along with the modernisation or construction of bridges and viaducts. Overall, this EU investment shall reduce travel time for cargo transport by 37 minutes.

More than €43 million are being invested to improve the country's goods transport services, which shall help in the acquisition of more than 930 platform wagons for transporting containers by railway. These wagons shall serve 91 routes between maritime and land terminals, covering the entire Polish territory. The aim is to shift goods transport from road to rail in order to cut carbon emissions

Poland will continue to be the biggest beneficiary of Cohesion Policy funds in the next long-term EU budget. The Commission is proposing to invest over €72 billion of Cohesion Policy to support the transformation of the Polish economy, with the aim of making it greener, more competitive and innovative.

Source: [European Commission](#)

EU-FUNDED UPGRADE ON NAPLES-BARI LINE

On 8 October, the European Commission approved a €124 million investment from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to upgrade a 16.5 km section of the Naples-Bari railway line, between Cancellò and Frasso Telesino in southern Italy.

The works include doubling-up single-track rail lines to increase speed, capacity and reduce travel time. On the link road to Naples, a connection will be made with the Maddaloni Marcianise freight yard, which passes under the Cancellò Caserta line. This will allow freight traffic to be directly routed to the yard, without affecting the regional line.



The Naples-Bari route is part of the EU's [Trans-European Transport \(TEN-T\) Network](#), on the [Scandinavian-Mediterranean core corridor](#). The completion of the corridor, with the construction of over 9,300 km of railway, a third of which is in Italy, is supposed to connect major EU economic poles.

Source: [European Commission](#)

Maritime

ITF WORKSHOP ON MARITIME LOGISTICS PERFORMANCE KPIS

On 30 September, CLECAT participated at the International Transport Forum's (ITF) workshop on the performance of maritime logistics, organised at the OECD/ITF premises in Paris. The aim of the workshop was to follow up on the Global Maritime Logistics Dialogue held in May, where the discussion on maritime logistics performance KPIS was initiated.

During the workshop, a number of stakeholders in the maritime logistics chain were represented, including the representatives of shippers, freight forwarders, carriers, ports and terminal operators. Participants agreed that the efficiency of maritime logistics can only be improved by better visibility of the performance of the whole chain, including the interfaces between the main stakeholders.

The debate focused more in detail on the maritime logistics performance and interface index, aiming to establish which indicators need to be included and which ones should be prioritised. CLECAT built on its point made in May, emphasising the importance of the reliable in-advance notice of arrival, which would allow freight forwarders and logistics service providers to organise the rest of the transport services well in advance. The ability to rely on the projected data would be a real improvement in the container supply chain, as it would not only allow to keep track of what was promised in the booking confirmation but to also be able to quickly adapt to potential changes, modifications and disruptions during transit. At the same time, it was recognised that the definition of ETA needs to be aligned as currently the understanding of it is not the same. The debate also featured such possible KPIS as the availability and quality of containers, carbon footprint of shipping services and the move of empty containers. Data collection issues and the need for a reliable exchange of information between the actors in the supply chain were also discussed.

It was agreed to apply a phased approach to developing a set of performance indicators, starting with what is feasible and already available. The discussion will continue at the Global Maritime Logistics Dialogue, to be held in Brussels in early December.

Air

ICAO ADOPTS CORSIA RESOLUTION

On 4 October, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) adopted a resolution to make its Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) the only global option available to its 193 Member States.



While the EU Member States were asked by both the European Commission and the European Parliament ahead of the meeting to lodge a formal reservation when appropriate, only verbal objections were made by transport officials. EU delegates have subsequently been criticised for failing to raise meaningful objections to CORSIA, considering the possible impact it may have on the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS). Formal reservations were only lodged by China and India.

The EU ETS currently includes all flights that operate within the European Economic Area (EEA), however, it precludes trips in and out of the catchment area. According to the newly adopted ICAO resolution, CORSIA should be the only global market-based measure applied to international flights, with the ratio of avoiding duplicate counting of emissions.

In response to this, Transport Commissioner Ms Violeta Bulc, argued "The EU has made clear that it supports CORSIA and will implement it from the start of the pilot phase, and called on all States to join. We also made clear that, under the Chicago Convention, the EU will preserve its policy space to pursue a higher climate action ambition and go beyond CORSIA in the EU. No State at ICAO put this into question, nor did any question the EU ETS. Therefore, there was no need to file a formal reservation to the final adopted CORSIA Resolution."

Source: [ICAO](#), [European Commissioner for Transport](#)

AUGUST AIR FREIGHT VOLUMES REMAIN WEAK

On 9 October, IATA released its data for global airfreight markets, which indicates that the demand for air cargo in August, measured in freight tonne kilometres (FTKs), decreased by 3.9% year-on-year. This marks the tenth consecutive month of year-on-year decline in freight volumes. Simultaneously, freight capacity, measured in available freight tonne kilometres (AFTKs), increased by 2% year-on-year.

Considering regional performance, the report indicates that European airlines posted a 3.3% decrease in freight demand in August 2019 year-on-year. Simultaneously, capacity increased by 3.3% year-on-year. The weakness in air freight volumes remained broad-based across all regions.

The full analysis is available [here](#).

Customs & Trade

EUROPEAN CUSTOMS DATA MODEL VERSION 5.0

As of 7 October, a new version of the European Union Customs Data Model (EUCDM) web-publication went live and accessible. The EUCDM Version 5.0 is available on the [EUCDM website](#), including a detailed list of the introduced changes.

The EUCDM 5.0 reflects all the recent changes in the customs legislation, which affect the data requirements, regarding the common data requirements for: applications and decisions (the "Annex A" of UCC DA and UCC IA); declarations, notifications and proof of the customs status of Union goods (the "Annex B" of UCC DA and UCC IA); registration of economic operators and other persons (the "Annex 12-01" of UCC DA and UCC IA).



The new version of the EUCDM takes account of the changes that have been introduced by the latest [amendment to the UCC Implementing Regulation](#) that was prepared to enable Member States to comply with new [VAT rules for e-commerce](#) and new [rules to fight VAT fraud](#).

Source: [European Commission](#)

EU CUSTOMS TRADER PORTAL

On 1 October, the European Commission launched the EU Customs Trader Portal, an electronic single point-of-access to a number of EU customs systems. In a first stage, the portal will be used for applications for Binding Tariff Information (eBTI) and applications for Authorised Economic Operator status (eAEO). As of 1 October 2019, these applications have to be made electronically through the Trader Portal and can no longer be introduced on paper.

The portal serves as a single point of contact for all correspondence and exchange of information. This includes the applications by the economic operators, additional information requests by the customs authority and replies from economic operators, and the subsequent management of the applications and decisions.

The EU Customs Trader portal can be accessed online and is secured through the Uniform User Management and Digital Signature System (UUM&DS).

Source: [European Commission](#)

EU-MONTENEGRO AGREEMENT ON BORDER MANAGEMENT

On 7 October, the EU signed an agreement with Montenegro on border management cooperation between Montenegro and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).

The agreement allows Frontex to assist Montenegro in border management, carry out joint operations, and deploy teams in the regions of Montenegro that border the EU, subject to Montenegro's agreement. These activities aim at tackling irregular migration, in particular sudden changes in migratory flows, and cross-border crime, and can involve the provision of increased technical and operational assistance at the border.

The draft decision on the conclusion of the agreement was sent to the European Parliament, which needs to give its consent for the agreement to be concluded.

Source: [Council of the EU](#)

WCO RELEASES RESEARCH PAPER ON FREE ZONES

On 30 September, the WCO released a research paper entitled [“Extraterritoriality of Free Zones: The Necessity for Customs Involvement”](#). The paper provides an analysis of the current situation regarding Customs procedures and controls related to Free Zones.

The first section of the paper outlines, from a Customs perspective, the definitions and characteristics of Free Zones as well as the economic benefits they offer. The second section addresses the risks



posed by Free Zones which primarily concern illicit activities perpetrated by exploiting certain aspects of Free Zones. In addition, the paper presents some cases of illicit trade and describes their global and interregional nature. The third section offers a detailed analysis of the situation where Customs' involvement and authority related to Free Zones tend to be at a low level, behind which prevails the perceived misconception of 'Extraterritoriality' of Free Zones.

Source: [World Customs Organization](#)

Digitalisation

PORTUGAL ACCEDES TO THE E-CMR PROTOCOL

On 26 September, the Portuguese Government acceded to the e-CMR protocol. The e-CMR protocol enables transport operators, drivers and shipping companies to use an electronic format of the traditionally paper-based CMR consignment note.

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

Sustainable Logistics

€117 MIL FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN EU

On 27 September, the Commission announced that the EU is investing over €117 million in 39 key transport projects that will help build missing connections across the continent, while focusing on sustainable transport modes. The projects will reduce the noise generated by freight trains, develop and improve cross-border railway links and upgrade crucial infrastructure in ports. They will be supported through the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the EU's financial mechanism supporting transport infrastructure.

Eight projects contribute to reducing rail freight noise in the EU by upgrading rail wagon braking systems. The quieter and more efficient brakes should result in better energetic performance of trains. Almost 75,000 freight railway wagons will be upgraded as part of these eight projects.

Furthermore, the call also supports rail infrastructure projects aiming at upgrading existing railway lines, like the electrification of the line from Austria to the Hungarian border and the cross-border section of the line between Bremen (Germany) and Groningen (the Netherlands).

Lastly, a large group of projects involve upgrading infrastructure within EU ports to foster multimodality and lowering emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases. In the port of Oulu (Finland), the EU will support the extension and construction of railway tracks and of a quay to accommodate longer trains, whilst in the port of Civitavecchia (Italy), the last mile of railway track will be upgraded and directly connected to the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).



The projects were selected for funding via a competitive call for proposals launched on 8 January in all EU Member States. The EU's financial contribution comes in the form of grants, with different co-financing rates depending on the project type.

Under the CEF programme, €23.2 billion is available for grants from the EU's 2014-2020 budget to co-fund TEN-T projects in the EU Member States. Since 2014, six waves of calls for project proposals have been launched. In total, so far CEF supports 756 projects for a total amount of €22.3 billion in the transport sector.

Following EU Member States approval of the proposal, the Commission will adopt a formal decision in the coming days. The Commission's Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) will then sign the grant agreements with the project beneficiaries at the latest by January 2020.

Source: [European Commission](#)

H2HAUL PROJECT TO TEST FUEL CELL ELECTRIC HDVS

On 1 October, a consortium of European heavy-duty vehicle manufacturers, fuel cell suppliers and hydrogen refuelling infrastructure providers announced the launch of the European Commission-supported H2Haul project, which aims to develop and test the zero-emission truck fleets and hydrogen refuelling stations.

During the project, a number of major European manufacturers will design, build and test three new types of fuel cell electric heavy-duty trucks, including the vehicles of up to 44 tonnes. The fuel cell systems for the vehicles will be produced in Europe by three different suppliers. A total of 16 vehicles will be tested in real-world operations at sites in Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland. The innovative hydrogen refuelling stations to be deployed will offer rapid, high capacity fuelling and thus support the demonstration of how fuel cell trucks can operate as direct replacements for diesel vehicles, with the equivalent driving range and load capacity, but with zero emissions.

The project will make a significant contribution towards preparing the market for further deployment of the technology in the 2020s, while contributing to the 2030 EU CO₂ reduction target achievement. "At EU level, heavy-duty vehicles account for 27% of the road transport CO₂ emissions; the need of introducing innovative powertrains based clean energy is obvious and urgent. The H2Haul project will play a key role in demonstrating how fuel cells and hydrogen are perfectly suited for decarbonising this transport segment, while supporting the European value chain leadership in this domain," said Bart Biebuyck, Executive Director of the FCH JU.

The project has been made possible by a grant of €12 million from the European Commission via the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (FCH JU). For more information, please see [here](#).

General

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE TEN-T NETWORK

On 24 September, the European Coordinators for the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) corridors presented the progress in the implementation of their corridors in a meeting of the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism (TRAN) Committee.



The Coordinators highlighted the key cross-border projects to better connect cities and regions across the Fehmarn-Belt, strengthen access to maritime ports at the Baltic and Adriatic seas for land-locked Member States, improve port hinterland connections, and enhance rail transport links across the Alps.

Moreover, the importance of ensuring a coherent development of the corridors in order to enable multimodal transport and achieve a modal shift towards more sustainable modes, was underlined. Streamlining governance and procedures in cross-border projects, due involvement of local stakeholders and continued commitment and coordination by Member States were cited as critical issues for the timely completion of projects.

During the debate, the Members of Parliament stressed the need to ensure close dialogue with regional governments and civil society and reduce administrative obstacles in the preparation of projects. In relation to climate change, speakers enquired about measures to maintain good navigability of rivers and asked about the role of airports in the corridors. Members acknowledged the role of the core network corridors in connecting cities and regions across Europe, but also recalled that corridors should reach out more to peripheral regions. Some speakers underlined that infrastructure investments should also target rail transport beyond the core network corridors, including for travel by international night trains.

Source: [European Parliament](#)

Forthcoming Events

CLECAT MEETINGS

CLECAT Road Logistics Institute

13 November, Brussels

CLECAT Customs and Indirect Taxation Institute

13 November, Brussels

CLECAT Maritime Logistics Institute

14 November, Brussels

CLECAT Freight Forwarders Forum 2019

14 November, Brussels

CLECAT Board/GA

15 November, Brussels

OTHER EVENTS WITH CLECAT PARTICIPATION

ELETA Project Final Conference

5 November 2019, Brussels



Smart Ports Smart City Expo World Congress
19-21 November 2019, Barcelona

EP/COUNCIL MEETINGS

European Parliament Plenary
21-24 October, Strasbourg

European Parliament TRAN Committee
6 November, Brussels

EU Transport Council
2 December, Brussels

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