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News from Brussels

NEXT ELP EVENT ON THE GREEN DEAL AND LOGISTICS

**European
Logistics
Platform**

In view of the developments regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the event of European Logistics Platform on the Green Deal and Logistics, which was scheduled for the 24th March in Brussels will be postponed. The European Logistics Platform would like to thank all of those who have expressed their interest in attending the event and will keep them informed once a new date has been set.

Road

POSTING NOTIFICATION OBLIGATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

As reported in the CLECAT newsletter on 7 February, companies established outside of the Netherlands, which temporarily post employees to the Netherlands, are obliged to report each posting from 1 March. This means that foreign transport companies must register their drivers via an electronic register if their drivers are going to carry out transport to or from the Netherlands or conduct cabotage on its territory. Transit is exempted from the obligation to report. The notification obligation also applies to independent self-employed drivers not based in the Netherlands.

As there have been notification problems in appointing a contact person in the Netherlands, the Dutch Ministry has indicated that it is working on a provisional solution: a contact person must still be appointed, but an address in the Netherlands does not need to be entered. Until this solution works effectively, the ministry advises to refrain from notifying employees.

The ministry has also emphasised that companies do not need to get worried if drivers are not registered from 1 March, since there is an official transition period until 1 September 2020. During this period, no fines will be imposed. In addition to this, the ministry has noted that it hopes to provide more information about the status for non-EU countries, which have a bilateral agreement with the Netherlands, in which no reference is made to applying minimum wages when loading/unloading in the Netherlands.

Air

COMMISSION ANNOUNCES TEMPORARY AMENDMENT OF SLOT RULES

On 10 March, the European Commission [announced](#) that in order to help ease the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the international and European aviation industry, it will put forward targeted legislation to temporarily alleviate airlines from their airport slot usage obligations under EU law.

Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean argued that given the urgency of the situation, the Commission will in due course present a legislative proposal to amend the EU Slot Regulation and calls on the European Parliament and the Council to swiftly adopt this measure in co-decision procedure.

This represents a shift in the [European Commission's position](#) from last week, when it announced that it was rejecting [demands by the airline industry](#) to suspend slot rules for congested airports, arguing that there is not enough data yet to support a general suspension. However, it had noted that any developments that could indicate a need for a broader dispensation at a global level, similar to SARS in 2003, when and if appropriate – will be reconsidered by the Commission on the basis of the evolution of the coronavirus outbreak, which has now been the case.

An airport slot is the right of an aircraft to take off or land at a congested airport at a certain time of day. Under the EU Airport Slots Regulation (EEC 95/93), airlines are subject to a 'use it or lose it' rule, and are required to operate 80% of their allocated slots, or face losing their right to the slot in future seasons.

Source: [European Commission](#)

Maritime

EU TRANSPORT MINISTERS ADOPT OPATIJA DECLARATION

At the Informal Meeting of EU Transport Ministers for Maritime, held in Opatija on 11 March, transport ministers addressed the topic of maritime affairs and adopted the [Opatija Declaration](#), which provides guidelines for the EU Member States with respect to the development of maritime policy by 2030. The main priorities of the declaration are the protection of marine environment, with the emphasis on supporting the fight against GHG reduction from ships, and further digitalisation in maritime and inland navigation.





The declaration is based on five key points: a carbon-neutral and zero pollution waterborne transport sector, digital transformation, competence and training of future seafarers, safety and the competitiveness of maritime sector at global level. The text mentions a wide variety of measures under consideration, including the development of clean alternative fuels and the associated infrastructure, adequate funding in support of research and development of new technologies, additional support for carbon-neutral port activities, a

dedicated low-pollution zone in the Mediterranean and a focus on digitalisation with the development of a new Waterborne Digital Roadmap. However, while the text does mention a “policy response to the European Green Deal”, there is no explicit reference to the European Commission’s commitment to include shipping in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS).

“Sustainability of the maritime sector and its global nature, digitalisation and automation, emissions reduction whilst retaining the competitiveness, future of seafaring and further investments in education of seafarers that will allow them to respond to future challenges are on top of our priorities,” said EU Commissioner for Transport Vălean, adding that the Opatija Declaration will open a floor for discussion on further Commission’s initiatives. The agreed points will be presented as draft conclusions at the next Transport Council meeting on 4 June.

Sustainable Logistics

5TH ANNUAL FUTURE OF TRANSPORT CONFERENCE

CLECAT joined the 5th Annual Future of Transport Conference, which took place last week in Brussels. The event gathered a high number of key EU transport stakeholders, who debated the critical pillars of EU transport policy, explored the role technology will play in achieving the vision for the future of mobility and discussed what can be expected from the next five years of EU policy-making under the leadership of the new European Commission in the transport sector.

Delivering introductory remarks, Mr Henrik Hololei, Director-General of DG MOVE, highlighted the importance of co-modality and connectivity for logistics, which digital technologies can facilitate. “Sustainability has been put at the heart of the Commission’s work on transport, but it has to be implemented in a smart way in order to be competitive and future-proof,” he stressed, disclosing that “data will therefore be at the forefront of the upcoming Smart and Sustainable Strategy that the Commission will put forward by the end of the year.” Asked about the best technologies for the clean vehicles transition, Mr Hololei emphasised that the technology neutrality principle must guide the transition, with all options put on the table, so that the market and end-users could decide on the best ones.



Introducing the panel entitled “Transport’s Role in Decarbonisation – Europe’s Commitment to a Sustainable Future”, Mr Alexandre Paquot, Head of Unit for Road Transport at DG CLIMA, reiterated



that the European Green Deal means a 90% reduction of emissions from transport. This will require making vehicles more efficient (via the revision of CO2 emission performance standards for vehicles), looking at the development and deployment of sustainable alternative fuels and infrastructure (via the review of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive) and re-evaluating the pricing of transport in order to reflect well its environmental impact (by reviewing the Energy Taxation Directive and including additional transport modes, including road, to the EU ETS). “We will need a more efficient transport system overall, which requires sufficient funding and support for innovation,” he noted.

The panellists agreed that the focus is on technologies that include electric and hydrogen but some space must be left for other zero-emission solutions as no one knows what technologies will be there in 2050. “What we need is clarity on the direction to which we are going,” explained Mr William Todts, Executive Director at Transport & Environment. The participants were however sceptical about including road transport into the EU ETS as this would make fuel unproportionately expensive.

Brexit

UK TO APPLY POSTPONED VAT ACCOUNTING AS OF JANUARY 2021

On 11 March, the UK Treasury announced through the 2020 Budget Report that from 1 January 2021, postponed accounting for VAT will apply to all imports of goods, including from the EU. This will provide an important boost to those VAT registered UK businesses which are integrated in international supply chains as they adapt to the UK’s position as an independent trading nation.

Postponed VAT accounting will change the time when import VAT is due to HM Revenue and Customs, providing an important cash flow advantage to businesses across the country that are integrated in international supply chains as they adapt to the UK’s position as an independent trading nation.

Source: [UK Government](#)

FIRST ROUND OF EU-UK NEGOTIATIONS

The first round of negotiations between the EU and the UK took place from Monday 2 March to Thursday 5 March in Brussels. In addition to the opening and closing sessions with the Chief Negotiators of both sides, as well as a series of bilateral meetings between the Chief Negotiators, specific negotiating sessions covered various topics including trade in goods, level playing field for open and fair competition and transport. The negotiations are carried out based on the positions of both parties which were adopted earlier this year: [Council negotiating directives to the Commission](#); and [UK’ approach to the negotiations with the EU](#).

The second round of negotiations between the EU and the UK will take place from Wednesday 18 March to Friday 20 March in London.

Regular updates on the EU-UK negotiations are published by the European Commission and can be followed on the Commission’s [website](#).



Customs & Trade

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON A NEW GSP REGULATION

On 11 March, the European Commission opened a [public consultation](#) on the existing legal framework governing the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP). The consultation comes in the context of the preparatory work launched by the Commission on the review of the preferential tariff scheme between the EU and developing countries. The public consultation results will feed into that preparatory work, including an Impact Assessment on possible policy options.

The objective of the public consultation is to hear the views, experiences and evidence of a wide variety of stakeholders which can provide precious insights to the ongoing reflection on the possible review and complement other analytical methods.

The target audience includes, *inter alia*, business associations, companies, SMEs, national and European chambers of commerce, trade unions, international organisations, academia and citizens. Stakeholders can contribute to this consultation by filling in an online questionnaire until 3 June 2020. The questionnaire is available in some or all official EU languages. Stakeholders can submit their responses in any official EU language.

Forthcoming Events

CLECAT MEETINGS

CLECAT-FIATA Joint Rail Institute

16 March 2020, **Online Meeting**

CLECAT Board Meeting

17 March 2020, **Online Meeting**

CLECAT General Assembly

17 March 2020, **Online Meeting**

CLECAT Road Institute

25 March 2020, **Online Meeting**

CLECAT Maritime Logistics Institute

23 April 2020, Porto

CLECAT Customs and Indirect Taxation Institute

27-28 April 2020, Brussels



EVENTS WITH CLECAT PARTICIPATION

TEN-T Days

13-15 May 2020, Sibenik

EP/COUNCIL MEETINGS

European Council

26-27 March 2020, Brussels

European Parliament Plenary

1-2 April 2020, Brussels

European Parliament TRAN Committee

21 April 2020, Brussels

EU Transport Council

4 June 2020, Brussels

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