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Brussels News

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER: FFF2020: 'LOGISTICS PUT TO TEST AT TIMES OF CRISIS'

Registration is still open for the CLECAT Freight Forwarders Forum, which will take place on the 12th of November.

At the opening session, **Maja Bakran Marcich**, Deputy Director General of DG MOVE will address the Commission's upcoming Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility, among others, as

it will cover many of the themes from the CLECAT event. These include sustainable logistics, resilience at times of COVID-19, and the need to keep global supply chains running at time of crisis. Freight forwarders continue to be put to test in view of the vulnerability of the container supply chain whilst they need to keep cargo flows running which is vital for the economy. It is hoped that the crisis will impact the freight forwarding industry also in a more positive way, building on indicators for increased resilience, visibility and sustainability.



Confirmed speakers include **Maja Bakran Marcich**, Deputy Director General, DG MOVE, **Stijn Rubens**, Drewry, **Olaf Merk**, ITF, **Pyers Tucker**, Senior Advisor Corporate Development, Hapag Lloyd AG, **Daniel Boeshertz**, DG COMP, **Lamia Kerdjoudj-Belkaid**, Secretary General, FEPORT, **Jens Roemer**, Managing Director, a. hartrodt, **Chris Taylor**, Head of Customs & Northern Ireland Policy, UK Mission to the EU, **Sophie Punte**, Smart Freight Centre, **Graham Major-Ex**, Head of Green Revenue, Sennder, **Paul Crombach**, AirFrance KLM Martinair Cargo, **Christophe Dussart**, Deputy Head of Unit for Aviation Policy, DG MOVE, **Lothar Moehle**, Director AVSEC & Governance Global Air Freight, DB

Schenker, **Alessandro Albertini**, President, ANAMA, **David Bellon**, President, Air Cargo Belgium and many others.

More information on each session and a detailed programme is available on the [CLECAT website](#).

Road

GERMAN PRESIDENCY EVENT ON ZERO-EMISSIONS TRUCKING



CLECAT joined an online conference hosted by the German EU Presidency on 28 October, which pondered the key technologies needed to enable zero-emissions trucking, as well as the framework conditions that should be created for climate-friendly trucks to contribute to reaching the ambitious EU climate targets.

The panellists emphasised the importance of governmental support for the sector's green transition, especially in terms of funding for the infrastructure deployment and the creation of a strategy at EU level to enable smart and sustainable mobility. Asa Pettersson from the Scania Group explained that the charging infrastructure is the main challenge for the deployment of e-trucks and called on the EU to strengthen electricity grids. She was supported by Peter Harris of UPS, who found electrification to be the key to enabling sustainable logistics. The biggest challenge is to distribute electricity in a cost-efficient way, he noted, adding that there is a need to create depot fuelling infrastructure for overnight charging. Heinrich Kerstgens, representing the European Clean Trucking Alliance, pointed out that such charging entails structural issues. He encouraged policy makers to move away from a technology-neutral position and make it more financially viable for companies to invest in zero-emission trucks.

Elisabeth Werner, Director for Land Transport at DG MOVE, agreed with Tilly Metz, MEP, who emphasised that the recovery and resilience funds should be used to boost the transition towards green trucking, avoiding loopholes favouring continued investment in fossil fuels. Ms Werner noted that a holistic approach should be taken to the decarbonisation of the whole transport system, with several focus areas: making the sustainable modes more attractive, making vehicles cleaner, boosting infrastructure deployment along the main corridors of the TEN-T Network and strengthening cross-border connectivity. "Whereas we cannot focus on one technology and need to look at different segments in road transport, four main pathways seem to be most appropriate: biofuels, synthetic fuels, LNG as a transition fuel, and mainly electricity and hydrogen," she stated.

EU ROAD FREIGHT RATE DEVELOPMENT BENCHMARK Q3 2020

Average European road freight prices increased slightly in the third quarter of this year, amid the improving demand since the easing of the first series of national and regional lockdowns, with pricing expected to hold firm or increase slightly in the final quarter, according to the latest [Ti and Upply's European Road Freight Rate Benchmark](#) survey.

The Q3 European Road Freight Rate Benchmark stood at €1,102, up 1.2% on Q2 levels, with rates having increased alongside the recovery in Europe's economic activity. With economies opening up post lockdown, road freight demand "rebounded sharply, pushing rates higher across nearly three quarters of trade lanes", Ti and Upply said. The new research also investigated how the demand



improvements have affected rates in individual countries, finding Germany to show the strongest correlation with the improving demand picture.

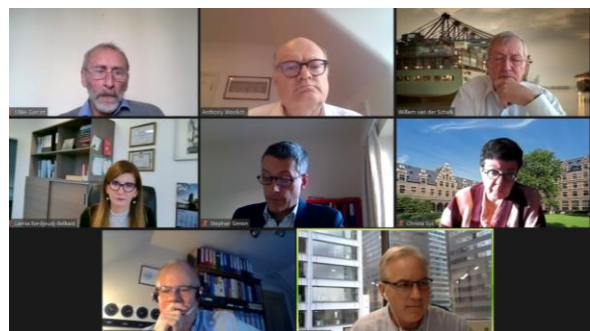
However, the market still does not resemble the pre-COVID levels, with uncertainty persisting. “Carriers on thin margins will often seek to hold prices up in these circumstances,” explained the researchers. Thomas Larrieu, Upfly’s Chief Data & Research Officer, commented: “While volumes decreased by 60% in certain countries in April, we anticipate a lower impact of the second lockdown decided in several European countries, since more businesses remain open this time. For Q4 2020, we forecast flat prices and even increasing ones on certain corridors.”

Maritime

GLS DEBATE ON CBER DECISION & IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS

CLECAT President Willem van der Schalk took part in a panel entitled “CBER Decision & Implications for Business: Fragmentation, Integration, Consolidation in Liner Shipping”, organised on 4 November as part of the virtual Global Liner Shipping Conference.

In his intervention, Mr van der Schalk noted that privileges for the shipping lines exist since 1995, and that the views of those against have been repeatedly ignored in the Consortia Block Exemption Regulation (CBER) renewal process in 2014 and more recently in 2019, even though the market nowadays is completely different, given the proliferation of digitalisation. “What we are seeing now is that those shipping lines that lost business to competitors are all of a sudden



approaching our customers and offering them new services, enabled by the unrestricted access they have to strategically sensitive data,” he stated, explaining that “this creates an unfair advantage for the shipping lines vis-à-vis the freight forwarders and the rest of the supply chain – we have a feeling that we are at the mercy of carriers without appropriate tools to control their behaviour.”

Lamia Kerdjoudj-Belkaid, Secretary General at FEPORT, also questioned the decision of the European Commission to prolong the CBER and therefore the privileges for the shipping lines, as there was no data collected to see what the impact was on other parties in the chain, including the port services, terminals and freight forwarders. She expressed hopes that the Commission would put effort in creating a data warehouse and monitor what is going on in the market in time for the next CBER review. “We cannot provide an exemption to the general rule without the burden of proof – and the burden of proof should be on those who benefit from such an exemption,” she said.

Notably, the announcement was made by Mike Garratt, Chairman at MDS Transmodal that, given the time available until the CBER is revisited again, the Global Shippers Forum (GSF) is partnering with MDS Transmodal to produce new quarterly container shipping market reports on the behaviour of the container shipping market from a shipper’s perspective, with an aim to assist the Commission with creating a clearer policy framework as to Europe’s public interest.



Air

AIR CARGO RECOVERY CONTINUES IN SEPTEMBER

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released [data for global air freight markets](#) in September showing that air cargo demand, while strengthening, remains depressed compared to 2019 levels.

The data shows that global demand in September, measured in cargo tonne kilometres (CTKs), dropped 8% year-on-year. That is an improvement from the 12.1% year-on-year drop recorded in August. Simultaneously, global capacity, measured in available cargo tonne kilometres (ACTKs), decreased by 25.2% in September year-on-year. That is nearly three times larger than the contraction in demand, indicating a severe lack of capacity in the market.

In terms of regional performance, strong regional variations are emerging with North American and African carriers reporting year-on-year gains in demand (+1.5% and +9.7% respectively), while all other regions remained in negative territory year-on-year. European carriers reported a decrease in demand of 15.7% year-on-year. Improvements have been slight but consistent amid recovering economic activity and increasing exports, however, all major routes remained in contractionary territory. International capacity decreased 32.8%.

“Air cargo volumes are down on 2019, but they are a world apart from the extreme difficulties in the passenger business. For air cargo, 92% of the business is still there, whereas about 90% of international passenger traffic has disappeared. Favourable indicators for the peak year-end season will support the continued recovery in demand. Already North American and African carriers are reporting demand gains on 2019. The challenge continues to be on capacity. As carriers adjust schedules to reflect falling passenger demand amid the resurgence of COVID-19, valuable belly capacity will be lost when it is needed the most,” said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA’s Director General and CEO.

Source: [IATA](#)

Rail

EC STARTS INFRINGEMENT AGAINST SWEDEN ON COMBINED TRANSPORT

The European Commission has sent a letter of formal notice to Sweden for incorrectly applying EU rules on the combined transport of goods between Member States ([Council Directive 92/106/EEC](#)).

The Directive provides for a special regime, i.e. combined transport, that encourages operators to transfer freight from road to rail or waterborne transport for a part of the journey. This combined transport helps to cut emissions from the transport sector and reduce other negative impacts of road transport. Sweden is limiting the definition of ‘combined transport operations’, preventing certain transport operations covered by the Directive from benefiting from the special regime. Sweden now



has two months to reply to the arguments raised by the Commission; otherwise, the Commission may decide to send a reasoned opinion.

Source: [European Commission](#)

EC APPROVES €600 MILLION GERMAN SCHEME TO SUPPORT SINGLE WAGON TRANSPORT

On 4 November, the European Commission approved, under EU State aid rules, a €600 million German scheme to support single wagon rail freight transport. The scheme, which will run until 30 November 2025, aims at making the use of single wagon freight transport less costly, thereby contributing to the modal shift of freight traffic from road to rail.

The measure is part of the Climate Action Programme 2030 of the German Federal Government. The aid will take the form of direct grants to rail freight operators active in the single wagon transport segment. The scheme intends to relieve rail freight transport companies from a part of the costs which are linked to charges for using marshalling yards and train formation facilities.

Single wagon transport refers to shipments smaller than the quantity of a full train that require the switching or shunting of wagons at departure or destination stations and at any intermediate stations. It accounts for around a quarter of rail freight services in Germany. It is an important element of logistics chains across the country and plays a key role in connecting important industrial sites. Furthermore, single wagon transport supports other forms of rail freight transport, unaccompanied combined transport and full trains.

The Commission considered that the measure is proportionate as the aid stays well below the maximum allowed aid intensities. The Commission found that the measure will improve the competitiveness of European railways and foster the shift of freight traffic from road to rail, in line with the EU's environmental and transport objectives, without unduly distorting competition. On this basis, the Commission concluded that the measure is compatible with EU State aid rules, in particular [Article 93](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the 2008 [Commission Guidelines on State aid for railway undertakings](#). The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.58046 in the [State aid register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved.

Source: [European Commission](#)

ERA WEBINAR ON CYBERSECURITY IN RAILWAYS

On 13 November, the EU Agency for Railways (ERA) is organising a webinar on cybersecurity in railways. The European Union has defined an objective and a framework on cybersecurity, including preparedness and awareness of all actors against cyber threats, and several initiatives are relevant for the railways. This ERA webinar on rail cybersecurity, jointly organised with the EU Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA), aims at presenting how the EU cybersecurity framework applies to railway stakeholders, and how the railway framework is evolving to reflect more the concerns on cybersecurity. A joint introduction from both ERA and ENISA Executive Directors will be followed by high level presentations on ENISA's activities related to rail and ERA's activities on cybersecurity. In the second part, the speakers will be available for questions & answers.



If you are interested in attending the webinar on 13 November from 10.00-11.00h, you can do so by following [this link](#). More information is available [here](#).

Supply Chain Security

MS URGED TO COMPLY WITH THEIR OBLIGATIONS REGARDING OES

On 30 October, the European Commission decided to send reasoned opinions to Belgium, Hungary and Romania regarding their failure to notify the Commission with information related to the identification of operators of essential services (OES).

The Commission, as set out in the Directive on security of network and information systems ([NIS Directive \(EU\) 2016/1148](#)) required this information to assess the consistency of approaches different Member States take when identifying operators of essential services (OES). The deadline to submit the information was 9 November 2018.

These reasoned opinions follow the letters of formal notice sent by the Commission in July 2019 to all three countries. In the case of Belgium, the missing information includes the number of operators in several critical sectors such as energy, transport, health and drinking water supply and distribution, as well as information about existing thresholds to identify them (used in the identification process). Hungary needs to notify about the operators of essential services for the transport sector that are still missing, while Romania's authorities still need to notify about national measures allowing for the identification of operators, the number of operators of essential services and thresholds used in the identification process. Belgium, Hungary and Romania now have two months to take the necessary measures to comply; otherwise, the case may be referred to the Court of Justice of the EU.

Source: [European Commission](#)

Customs and Trade

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON SINGLE WINDOW PROPOSAL

On 30 October, the European Commission opened a [public consultation](#) on the [legislative proposal](#) establishing the EU Single Window Environment for Customs, which was adopted by the Commission on 28 October. The public consultation will be open until 1 January 2021 (midnight Brussels time). All feedback received will be summarised by the European Commission and presented to the European Parliament and Council with the aim of feeding into the legislative debate.

The EU Single Window Environment for Customs is a future-looking digital solution for quicker and more efficient sharing of electronic data between different government authorities involved in the clearance of goods. Once fully rolled out, the Single Window will allow businesses to complete border formalities in one single portal in a given Member State. Customs and other authorities will then be able to automatically verify that the goods in question comply with EU requirements and that the necessary formalities have been completed.



2021 VERSION OF THE COMBINED NOMENCLATURE

On 30 October, the European Commission published the latest version of the Combined Nomenclature (CN), applicable as from 1 January 2021. The latest version is now available as [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2020/1577](#) in the Official Journal of the EU.

The Combined Nomenclature forms the basis for the declaration of goods at importation or exportation or when subject to intra-Union trade statistics. This determines which rate of customs duty applies and how the goods are treated for statistical purposes. The CN is thus a vital working tool for business and the Member States' customs administrations. The CN is updated every year and is published as a Commission Implementing Regulation in the Official Journal of the EU.

Source: [European Commission](#)

NEW VAT GUIDELINES

The [latest list of guidelines agreed by the VAT Committee](#) was published on 30 October. The guidelines address specific matters concerning the application of EU VAT provisions raised by the Commission or a Member State.

The latest list of guidelines includes guidelines agreed within the VAT Committee during its latest meeting of June 2020 and concern certain specific aspects of the implementation of the VAT Quick Fixes. This list of guidelines includes the text of all the guidelines issued since the VAT Committee was set up in 1977. An [index of guidelines](#) is also made available. It links the guidelines agreed with the relevant provisions of the VAT Directive and comments upon them.

The VAT Committee was set up under the VAT Directive to promote the uniform application of the provisions of the VAT Directive. Because it is an advisory committee only and has not been attributed any legislative powers, the VAT Committee cannot take legally binding decisions. It can however give some guidance on the application of the Directive.

Source: [European Commission](#)

General

EC UPDATES TEN-T CORRIDOR WORK PLANS

On 3 November, the European Commission [published](#) nine updated corridor work plans. The new work plans guide the development of the core network corridors until 2030 – the completion target of the core network.

The plans are drawn up by the respective European Coordinator and agreed with the Member States concerned. A plan resumes the current infrastructure state along the corridor in question and sets out the challenges for future infrastructure development. It also sets the framework for investment in transport infrastructure – from public and private, European and national sources. This fourth edition of the work plans is also an important input in the review process of the TEN-T Regulation. The updated, fourth generation work plans are available for download [here](#).



Forthcoming Events

EVENTS AND MEETINGS

CLECAT Maritime Logistics Institute
10 November 2020, **Online Meeting**

CLECAT Freight Forwarders Forum
12 November 2020, **Online Event**

CLECAT Board/General Assembly
13 November 2020, **Online Meeting**

CLECAT Road Logistics Institute
17 November 2020, **Online Meeting**

EVENTS WITH CLECAT PARTICIPATION

Digital Transport Days
18 November 2020, **Online Event**

FIATA Region Europe Meeting
18 November 2020, **Online Meeting**

Competition Law in Transport
1 December 2020, **Brussels**

EU MEETINGS

Council of the European Union

Transport Council
8 December 2020, Brussels

Environment Council
14 December 2020, Luxembourg

European Parliament

European Parliament Transport Committee
10 November 2020, Brussels

European Parliament Plenary
11-13 November 2020, Brussels



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