

Hearings of European Commissioners-designate

Violeta Bulc

Transport

Hearing due to be held on Monday 20 October at 19.00 hours.



Violeta Bulc, Slovenia.

EP Committee responsible for the Hearing
Transport and Tourism (TRAN)

Biography

Born in 1964, Violeta Bulc holds a Master's degree in Information Systems from Golden Gate University in San Francisco and an MBA from IEDC-Bled School of Management. She has previously worked in IT and telecoms and founded Vibacom, a firm specialised in sustainable and innovative business solutions. She retired from her position as president of the management board of environmental NGO Umanotera, and as a member of the Managers' Association's management board, to take up a position in the Slovenian government. On 19 September, she became Minister without portfolio, responsible for development, strategic projects and cohesion. On 2 October, she was appointed Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia.

This Briefing has been prepared for the additional hearing required after Commission President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker reshuffled his team following the completion of the original set of parliamentary hearings of Commissioners-designate. Violeta Bulc was designated for the transport portfolio on 15 October. Designed to give Members of the European Parliament an overview of major issues of interest in the context of the hearings, the full set of these Briefings can be found at: http://ethinktank.eu/commissioner_hearings

Background

Considered as essential to the free movement of people and goods, transport policy was one of the Union's first common policies, going back to the Treaty of Rome, although only in 1980s and 1990s was significant progress made in realising the goals set out in the Treaties. Covering the opening of transport markets and the creation of fair conditions for competition, transport policy has been oriented in recent years towards harmoniously and simultaneously developing the different modes of transport, taking into account environmental issues in transport and promoting sustainable mobility.

Transport is increasingly recognised as a key economic actor. The transport and storage services sectors represent about 4.8% of total gross value added (GVA) in the EU and account for 5% of total employment (2011 data, including postal and courier activities). Over half of these (55%) are in land transport, 4% in air transport, 2% in water transport and 24% in warehousing and supporting transport activities. The average European household spends roughly 13% of its income on transport. Analysis shows that air transport liberalisation is estimated to have boosted EU gross domestic product (GDP) by 4% and to have created some 1.4 million full-time equivalent jobs in the period up to 2006. More than 3 million people are currently employed in the civil aviation sector within the EU, many of them in highly skilled jobs.

EU action in the field of Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) aims to promote the interconnection and interoperability of national networks, as well as access to them, in order to ensure that the internal market functions well and to foster economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Treaty base and EP competence

Article 4(2)(g) and Articles 90 to 100 (Title VI) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) cover transport; and Article 4(2)(h) and Articles 170 to 172 (title XVI) deal with TEN-T. The European Union (EU) shares competence with the Member States in the area of transport and trans-European networks. The ordinary legislative procedure now applies to both fields.

Recent developments

In 2011, the European Commission adopted a White Paper '**Transport 2050**' providing a comprehensive strategy and vision for tomorrow's transport. The objective is to create a Single European Transport Area while at the same time reducing Europe's dependence on imported oil, and cut carbon emissions in transport by 60% by 2050.

According to the outgoing Transport Commissioner, Siim Kallas, the major achievements in the field of transport over the last five years are in particular the revision of the **TEN-T guidelines** and the adoption of the **Connecting Europe Facility** (CEF) to improve key transport connections in the Single Market (funding tripled for the period 2014-20), the **reinforcement of research and development** to deliver cleaner and more efficient planes, trains and cars (50% increase of funding) and progress in specific sectors (see below).

Road transport witnessed progress notably in the area of road safety with the adoption of the roadworthiness package (covering the periodic tests for motor vehicles and their trailers, the technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles and the registration documents for vehicles). The number of road deaths has declined by 17% since 2010. Other legislation regarding e.g. the deployment of the interoperable EU-wide eCall emergency service, the cross-border exchange on road safety related traffic offences, and a new tachograph Regulation was also adopted.

On top of a Regulation on rail freight and the recast of the First Railway Package, the Commission launched in 2013 the **Fourth Railway Package**, focusing on governance, opening of domestic passenger markets, interoperability and safety.

As for **air transport**, the Commission presented the 'airport package' in 2011 (on noise abatement, slots allocation and ground-handling services) and in 2013 the 'Single European Sky 2+ package' (SES2+), aimed at speeding up the implementation of the existing Single European Sky legislation.

Legislation was also adopted in the field of **Maritime transport** (for example on the minimum level of training of seafarers, and on port State control, in order to align legislation with the Maritime Labour Convention) and **inland waterways**.

Passenger rights were extended to cover those travelling by bus, coaches, sea and inland waterways and in 2013 the Commission presented a proposal for revising the existing rules regarding air passengers' rights.

Key measures aiming to sustain **cleaner, safer and more efficient transport** were taken, such as the Directive on the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport, the Eurovignette Directive on the charging of heavy goods vehicles, and the Commission's proposal on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructures.

European Parliament

The European Parliament (EP) has had for many years a key role in the development and strengthening of the common transport policy. Since the Amsterdam Treaty, legislation on transport policy has been adopted using the codecision procedure (except in a limited number of cases) and the Lisbon Treaty has not led to substantial changes. The EP is also very active in shaping the policy through the adoption of resolutions: for example, a 2012 resolution on the implementation of the Single European Sky legislation called for measures to speed up implementation, and a 2011 resolution commented on the 2011 Commission's comprehensive strategy for transport. The EP is also requested to give its consent to most international transport agreements (mostly air transport agreements).

The EP has long been supportive of TENs. In the context of the revision of the TEN-T guidelines, the EP backed the Commission's proposal against Council attempts to alter the proposal, managed to get many of its amendments reflected into the final text, calling in particular for a stronger and demonstrated EU added value.

Priorities and challenges

The short-term priorities or major pending files to be examined in the coming months by the EP and the Council are measures notably on the Fourth Railway Package, weights and dimensions, cross-border enforcement rules, port services, the Single European Sky and urban mobility.

According to the outgoing Commissioner Kallas, progress has in particular taken place in the field of air, rail and also maritime transport. The priorities of the next Commission might therefore concentrate on strengthening road transport policy (in particular cross-border issues or those relating to the quality of infrastructure), public and urban transport, intelligent transport systems, the development of data processing, and possibly to keep on working on the railway and aviation reforms.

In the medium to long term, the focus will consist of pursuing the objectives enshrined in the 2011 comprehensive strategy, namely removing the remaining obstacles to the internal

transport market, and developing the TEN-T including by mobilising instruments available under the Connecting Europe Facility. Urban mobility and related issues congestion - air and noise pollution, road safety and the increase of oil-based fuel prices - will come to the fore. The issue of charges to access transport infrastructures for all transport modes is also likely to become more prominent.

Sustainability will also be an important factor and transport policy must aim to help Europe achieve its climate and energy objectives and promote the development of smart cities. Improving the interconnection of all modes of transport should also contribute to a stronger internal market and to the integration of the European economy across borders, in full respect of social standards and labour law.

European Added Value

The recent study by the Parliament's European Added Value Unit, 'Mapping the Cost of Non-Europe, 2014-19' notes that although significant progress has been made in establishing a common transport policy, important efficiency gains could be obtained from further deepening the single market in this field. Preliminary findings show that the potential increase in GDP from a more fully integrated transport sector would be at least €5.5 billion per year.

Further reading

[Transport and Tourism policy](#), Factsheets on the EU / European Parliament, 2014.

[Transport](#) and Trans-European Transport Network ([TEN-T](#)) / European Commission (websites).

[Urban Mobility](#) / Ariane Debyser, European Parliamentary Research Service, 2014.

[Mapping the Cost of Non-Europe 2014-19](#) / Joseph Dunne, European Added Value Unit, EPRS, European Parliament, July 2014.

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eprs@ep.europa.eu

<http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu> (intranet)

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