

TRANNEWS

Newsletter from the European Parliament
Committee on Transport and Tourism
Number 78, 17 February 2011

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TRAN Committee meeting 14 February 2011, Strasbourg

Presentation of draft opinion

Engine provisions for tractors placed on the market under the flexibility scheme Rapporteur: Ms Olga Sehnalová (S&D, CZ) Opinion to ENVI Committee

Providing more flexibility for tractor producers when it comes to introducing more stringent engine emissions limits is the key aim of this proposal. The Commission put forward short-term measures to help manufacturers overcome the consequences of the economic crisis. These measures would expire on 31 December 2013.

The Rapporteur's draft opinion recommended approving the proposal without amendment. Despite some criticism, especially regarding the risk of penalizing producers who had made the necessary investments, the Rapporteur believed that small and medium sized enterprises needed support. During the debate, Members emphasised that tractor producers have been heavily hit by the crisis. They require more time to obtain capital that can be invested in developing new technologies so as to comply with the more stringent limits.

The Commission welcomed the draft opinion and underlined that the forthcoming revision of the Directive would include ambitious exhaust emissions limits. Therefore, despite the short-term concessions, the long-term environmental targets would not be compromised.

Timetable foreseen:

- **Deadline for amendments: 17 February 2011.**
- Adoption in TRAN: March 2011.

Exchange of views

with Commissioner Siim Kallas

• TEN-T

Mr Kallas informed the Committee about the outcome of the informal Council of Transport Ministers, organized by the Hungarian Presidency in Gödöllő (Budapest) on 7 and 8 February. This meeting was entirely dedicated to the process of revising the Trans-European Transport Network. He reported that the discussions confirmed Member States' support for the dual-layer (comprehensive and core) network structure. They also considered the methodology for drawing up the new core network to be a good basis for the revision of TEN-T policy. He insisted that the objective will remain unchanged: the new core network will identify projects which offer the highest European added value while also including innovative and intelligent projects. In designing the future network, appropriate connections with candidate and neighbouring countries will be taken into account.

He made it clear that Union resources will remain available to develop the wider comprehensive network (so helping less developed comprehensive networks catch up) but also that EU funds will be mainly concentrated on the core network. Similarly, existing priority projects constitute an *acquis* of the current TEN-T policy and continuity will be ensured so far as possible in order to draw benefit from the efforts already spent. However such projects could be abandoned or cut if they had no realistic perspective of being achieved.

Mr Kallas regretted Member States' tendency to be rather vague about how the new TEN-T policy would be financed. On the one hand, they wanted EU funds to continue to provide adequate financial support for the whole network. On the other, they stressed the need for better coordination of available resources and for concentrating them on projects with the highest strategic importance. They also considered innovative financial instruments to be a means of tapping private funding but not an alternative to public spending. The Commissioner emphasised the need to create additional revenue streams, including from the internalisation of external costs, to finance transport infrastructure.

The Commission intends to hold technical meetings with various Member States to present how the methodology to define the core network will be applied in a particular country. Mr Kallas reassured the Committee that Parliament would be appropriately involved in the whole process, including the phase leading up to the legislative proposal.

Members' comments were generally favourable to the Commission's approach to revising the TEN-T network. They thought the revision should contribute to an improved internal market and to making the best possible use of the resources that will be available within the new Multi-annual Financial Framework.

Several Members reminded Mr Kallas of the importance of linking EU co-financing for the TEN-T

network with conditions that Member States have to respect to speed up the completion of the network, in particular the delayed cross-border sections.

▪ **Aviation security: liquids**

Mr Kallas reaffirmed that the Commission would not change the rules on liquids carried by air passengers despite the criticism voiced by airports. He briefly explained the rules (from April 2011, some liquids bought at third country airports may be carried after screening, and from April 2013, all liquids) and underlined that they were approved by Parliament when they were introduced. Mr Kallas added that many airports were on track, that the equipment was available on the market and that there was no convincing evidence to justify changing these rules. Whether there would be problems with the implementation of the screening would depend on airports' degree of preparation.

Many Members approved the Commission's clear position and several reminded the audience of the debate when the rules were brought in. Parliament then favoured lifting the liquids ban at the earliest possible date. Other Members asked the Commissioner about more stringent national measures, possible negative effects on passenger processing and the state of technology. Some gave priority to the need for common rules within the Union and for adequate information to passengers. Others questioned the usefulness of the current rules in general.

Mr Kallas confirmed that Member States could maintain a liquids ban as a more stringent, national measure but thought such a position would be hard to justify. On equipment, he said that there were 10 types of European Civil Aviation Conference-approved scanners of liquids.

▪ **Work programme 2011**

Ongoing legislative priorities, especially the Eurovignette, where the Commission was prepared to support some improvements on earmarking, was Mr Kallas' opening theme. These improvements should take account of the solution found in the framework of the Emission Trading Scheme Directive. A compromise on cross-border enforcement in the field of road safety could be reached under the Hungarian Presidency. Moreover, Mr Kallas asked Members to support key issues in the recast of the first railway package such as fairer competition, a reinforced role for regulators, organisational reforms and the appropriate financing of and charging for rail infrastructure.

The long-awaited White Paper on the future of transport will be adopted by the Commission in the second half of March 2011 along with other major policy papers on energy and climate. Competitiveness would be a key element of another important legislative initiative, the airport package. This would consist of revising the slot Regulation, the groundhandling Directive and the noise Directive. As far as passenger rights were concerned, he emphasised that the focus would first be on evaluating the implementation of the existing rules. A Communication on passenger rights

covering all modes of transport would be published later in 2011.

Another set of actions would address the maritime sector. Mr Kallas announced a Social Maritime Agenda package which would concentrate on the application of the Maritime Labour Convention and on the training of seafarers.

Regarding road transport, he said there would be a revised text on the tachograph. This would strengthen protection against fraud and improve the functionality of the digital tachograph that professional drivers use to register their driving hours. In addition, a Communication on road infrastructure charges levied on passenger cars will be presented this year.

Furthermore, the Commission plans to present one Communication on a Comprehensive Transport Security Policy and another on the Strategic Transport Technology Plan.

Members welcomed Mr Kallas' assurance that the White Paper on the Future of Transport would be adopted in March. They made comments, in particular, on the possibility of requiring unbundling in the railway sector, groundhandling, passenger rights, including parents' rights to receive assistance when travelling with children, and tachographs.

Mr Kallas replied that the question of unbundling would be tackled in a legislative initiative, due in 2012. The current recast of the railway package gave priority to rolling-stock, infrastructure and maintenance. Regarding groundhandling, he said the sector needed reform and that the industry must develop quality standards. Members could expect the proposal for tachographs in June 2011.

**Cross-border enforcement on road safety
Rapporteur: Ms Inés Ayala Sender (S&D, ES)**

Ordinary legislative procedure, second reading

Failure to enforce road safety sanctions on people driving abroad might have led to a feeling of impunity among foreign drivers and to unequal treatment of European citizens. The Commission proposed a Directive to remedy to this situation in 2008, which Parliament strongly supported during its first reading.

The December Transport Council reached a political agreement on this proposal. The Council text - which heavily modifies the Commission proposal, especially as concerns the legal basis - will be transmitted to Parliament in the coming weeks. This will start the second reading discussions.

In order to prepare, the TRAN Committee gave a mandate, on the basis of Parliament's first reading, to Ms Ayala Sender who will make contact with the Hungarian Presidency before the official transmission of the Council's first reading.

Timetable foreseen:

- Official transmission of Council's first reading position in plenary: March II
- Adoption in plenary: July 2011.

Adoptions in plenary 14-17 February 2011, Strasbourg

Passenger rights: bus and coach transport **Rapporteur: Mr Antonio Cancian (EPP, IT)** **Ordinary legislative procedure, third reading**

Bus and coach passengers will, from 2013, enjoy a comprehensive set of rights, comparable to those already applying to other transport modes. These rights are laid down in a Regulation, which was adopted in plenary on 15 February, confirming an agreement reached in Conciliation at the end of last year.

Thanks to Parliament's insistence during the negotiations, the Regulation defines a set of basic rights applying to all regular bus services regardless of distance. These rights include non-discriminatory access, travel information before and during a journey, non-discriminatory treatment of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility (PRM) as well as financial compensation for the loss of or damage to wheelchairs and other mobility equipment.

When using long-distance services of at least 250 kilometres (or part of such services), passengers have a number of additional rights. In particular, they are entitled to compensation in the case of death or injury and if luggage is lost or damaged. Such passengers will also receive practical assistance in the event of accident (including coverage of accommodation expenses). Reimbursement or rerouting will be required if there is overbooking, cancellations or delays of more than 2 hours. Furthermore, adequate assistance (snacks, meals and refreshments) must be provided in such situations. There will be specific, free of charge assistance for disabled people and PRM (including, where necessary, free transport for those accompanying).

During the plenary debate, most Members thought that the agreed text was well-balanced. It provided a high level of passenger protection while preserving the economic viability of the bus and coach industry, which consists largely of SMEs. Others would have preferred the Regulation to have a wider scope (fixing a lower limit than 250 km for journeys when the additional rights would apply). However, they recognised that Parliament had arguably obtained the best possible result, given Council's resistance during the negotiations.

The report was adopted by 504:63:89.

Air Transport Agreement between EC and Brazil **Rapporteur: Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D, RO)** **Consent procedure**

Plenary gave its consent to the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and Brazil on certain aspects of air services on 15 February in a

single vote. The Council can now proceed to the final conclusion of the Agreement.

The recommendation was adopted by a show of hands.

TRAN Committee meeting 28 February, Brussels

Provisional agenda:

Monday, 28 February, afternoon

- Air transport agreement EC and USA / Zasada **(vote)**
- Air transport agreement EC and Canada / Țicău **(vote)**
- Air transport agreement EC and Vietnam / Riquet **(vote)**
- Discharge 2009 Agencies and SESAR / Uggias **(vote)**
- Discharge 2009 Commission / Grosch **(vote)**
- Tourism in Europe / Fidanza
- European statistics on tourism / Simpson
- Road Safety / Koch

TRAN Committee meetings 2011, Brussels

Monday, 14 March, 15.00-18.30
Tuesday, 15 March, 9.00-12.30
Tuesday, 15 March, 15.00-18.30
Wednesday, 16 March, 9.00-12.30

Monday, 11 April, 15.00-18.30
Tuesday, 12 April, 9.00-12.30
Tuesday, 12 April, 15.00-18.30
Wednesday, 13 April, 9.00-12.30

Monday, 23 May, 15.00-18.30
Tuesday, 24 May, 9.00-12.30
Tuesday, 24 May, 15.00-18.30
Wednesday, 25 May, 9.00-12.30
Wednesday, 25 May, 15.00-18.30

Monday, 20 June, 15.00-18.30
Tuesday, 21 June, 9.00-12.30
Tuesday, 21 June, 15.00-18.30

Monday, 11 July, 15.00-18.30
Tuesday, 12 July, 9.00-12.30
Tuesday, 12 July, 15.00-18.30
Wednesday, 13 July, 9.00-12.30
Wednesday, 13 July, 15.00-18.30

Tuesday, 30 August, 9.00-12.30
Tuesday, 30 August, 15.00-18.30
Wednesday, 31 August, 9.00-12.30
Wednesday, 31 August, 15.00-18.30

Thursday, 8 September, 9.00-12.30

Monday, 10 October, 15.00-18.30
Tuesday, 11 October, 9.00-12.30
Tuesday, 11 October, 15.00-18.30

Monday, 21 November, 15.00-18.30

Tuesday, 22 November, 9.00-12.30
Tuesday, 22 November, 15.00-18.30
Wednesday, 23 November, 9.00-12.30
Wednesday, 23 November, 15.00-18.30

Monday, 19 December, 15.00-18.30
Tuesday, 20 December, 9.00-12.30
Tuesday, 20 December, 15.00-18.30
Wednesday, 21 December, 9.00-12.30
Wednesday, 21 December, 15.00-18.30