

Newsletter

TRAN Committee meetings of October 2023

Editorial by Karima Delli

Dear colleagues and friends,

During our two October meetings, we proceeded with the presentations of draft reports on the Road Safety and Maritime Safety packages, which will remain at the centre of our work in coming months. We also considered an initiative report on an EU Ports Strategy, which tackles the issue of foreign ownership in EU ports. Poldep B presented a study designed to provide academic input into this topical political issue. The Commission also presented its proposal on 'Weights and Dimensions' in the context of the 'greening of freight' package. This very full month also included a workshop on combined transport, a hearing on the aviation sector and exchanges on women in transport and the tourism strategy respectively.



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Tourism Task Force update: Exchange of views with stakeholders on Tourism aspects of the revision of the Package Travel Directive

Meeting of 9 October 2023

European Maritime Safety Agency and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1406/2002

Consideration of draft report

Rapporteur: Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar (PPE)

The Rapporteur welcomed the main elements of the Commission proposal, stressing the need to restructure the agency and redefine its mandate, allowing for its greater flexibility and a more proactive role in ensuring maritime safety. She also highlighted the need to extend its scope over topics such as decarbonisation, digitalisation or cyber-security. She then presented the key elements of her draft report, calling for an EP representative to be appointed to the EMSA board. She also stressed the need to increase EMSA's budget to ensure sufficient financial and human resources to achieve these goals, but not to the detriment of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) programmes. Lastly, the Rapporteur stressed the importance of EMSA's international role, proposing its systematic participation in International Maritime Organization (IMO) meetings.

Shadow rapporteurs and Members in general expressed strong support, highlighting EMSA's role in investigating and preventing maritime accidents and enforcing rules. They all fully agreed with the Rapporteur's views on EMSA's financial and human resources.

The Commission representatives welcomed favourably the Rapporteur's proposal to appoint two MEPs to the management board as observers, but were concerned about a possible removal of the Commission's right of veto, and about EMSA's reinforced presence in the IMO, which could weaken the voice of the EU there.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) also presented its draft opinion, highlighting the need to agree on a common approach on the implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) and to improve EMSA's relations with stakeholders.

[Procedure file](#)

Amending Directive 2009/18/EC establishing the fundamental principles governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector

Consideration of draft report

Rapporteur: Caroline Nagtegaal (Renew)

The Rapporteur presented her draft report on this proposal, which forms part of the maritime safety package and aims to update an existing directive laying down rules for the investigation of major maritime accidents.

The Rapporteur started by expressing broad support for the Commission proposal, particularly the adjustments proposed to bring the directive in line with other relevant EU legislation and international (IMO) regulations. She then explained the rationale behind some of the 22 amendments, which she put forward in her draft report. Most notably, the Rapporteur proposes the introduction of a tighter deadline for the start of investigations after an accident occurs, the deletion of the proposed extension of the scope (which would oblige Member States to investigate severe accidents of fishing vessels of less than 15 meters in length) as well as additional alignments to international rules.

The Shadows echoed the Rapporteur's general support for the Commission proposal but some expressed diverging views on the amendments she proposed. While a majority agreed on shortening the period until the start of the investigations, some expressed a preference for including small fishing vessels within the scope. Other points highlighted during the discussions included the need for close involvement of EMSA in investigations and the possible inclusion of measures to prevent accidents from happening in the first place.

[Procedure file](#)

Building a comprehensive European port strategy

Consideration of draft report

Rapporteur: Tom Berendsen (PPE)

The Rapporteur presented the main elements of his draft report on an EU Ports Strategy. The focus of his report lies on the security risks associated with increased foreign influence by investments in strategic

maritime infrastructure and possible measures to address them at EU level. In this respect, he asked for an in-depth analysis by the Commission, followed by a strengthening of existing instruments, such as the screening of foreign investments, as well as the introduction of new instruments to ensure greater scrutiny. Furthermore, he pointed out the challenges for ports arising from the required energy transition, while emphasising their crucial role as energy hubs. Finally, the Rapporteur underlined the need to preserve the competitiveness of European ports through digitalisation and improved connections with the hinterland in view of their vital role for the EU's economy.

In the ensuing debate, groups generally welcomed the draft report and the call for greater scrutiny. It was stressed, however, that this should not lead to protectionist measures, which could jeopardize the necessary investments. Other speakers outlined a number of elements they would like to add to the report by way of amendments. In this respect, reference was made in particular to improved health and social standards for dockworkers and seafarers. Furthermore, there were calls to include sustainability aspects and improved environmental standards as well as measures to adapt to the consequences of climate change, such as rising sea levels. Members criticised the lack of action by the EU so far and called on the Commission to come forward with a comprehensive ports strategy to address the challenges described in an integrated way.

[Procedure file](#)

Amending Directive 2009/21/EC on compliance with flag State requirements

Consideration of draft report

Rapporteur: Vera Tax (S&D)

The Rapporteur welcomed the Commission proposal and said it would improve the quality of inspections of EU ships, improve oversight of recognised organisations working under the responsibility of a flag state and set up a more harmonised training system for EU inspectors. She emphasised her main priorities: mandatory use of electronic certificates, EMSA training of inspectors extending to the social dimension and labour conditions on inspected ships and, last but not least, establishing a “genuine link” between a flag state and vessels flying its flag. The latter measure, although difficult to enforce, was praised by some Members as

a step towards combatting fraud and preventing the shipping companies from reflagging their ships in order to avoid higher taxes and quality standards. Most comments from the floor were favourable to the draft report and especially to the digitalisation and the consideration of the human factors linked to social and employment standards. Members underlined the need to change the currently diverging levels of requirements between flag states and to improve overall transparency of inspections. Only a few voiced concern about the Commission proposal weakening the prerogatives of the Member States and taking away their flexibility in employing the most skilled administrators and inspectors.

[Procedure file](#)

Amending Directive 2009/16/EC on port State control

Consideration of draft report

Rapporteur: Vera Tax (S&D)

The Rapporteur welcomed the Commission proposal and presented the priorities included in her report: a better consideration of environmental factors in the inspections by inclusion, in particular, of the carbon intensity indicator (CII); support for a voluntary inspection system for fishing vessels larger than 24 meters in preparation for the entry into force of the Cape Town Agreement. This will help to tackle the relatively high levels of accidents aboard these vessels. Another priority was investment, research and training towards optimal use of digitalisation. In particular incentivizing the use of the electronic certificate will allow for more efficient and targeted inspections; the welfare of seafarers which is an integral part of safety and should also be part of the training of inspectors. The Shadow rapporteurs expressed overall support for the Rapporteur's text in particular on digitalisation and the consideration of the welfare of seafarers and the human factor. However, some Shadow rapporteurs expressed doubts on the inclusion of the CII in its current form. Other Shadows also indicated their wish to include additional elements in the report such as the issue of container loss. The EESC representative, Mr Gkofas, highlighted the particular importance of alignment with international standards, the condition of seafarers and the need for an expansion of the role (and budget) of EMSA. The representative of the Commission, Ms Ioannidou indicated her support for

Rapporteur's approach in particular on training and capacity building.

[Procedure file](#)

Amending Council Directive 96/53/EC laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorised dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorised weights in international traffic

Exchange of views with Commission representatives

Rapporteur: Isabel García Muñoz (S&D)

The Commission presented the legislative proposal on Weights & Dimensions (which is an amendments of the current Directive 96/53/EC). The proposal is part of the 'Greening the freight' package and its aim is to encourage the uptake of zero emission vehicles and intermodal transport, harmonize the rules on the maximum weights and dimensions of heavy duty vehicles in cross-border operations and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of enforcement. The Rapporteur broadly supported the proposal, but indicated that some modifications could be possible to further incentivise road transport operators to shift towards zero-emission vehicles and multi-modal transport. Also in terms of smart enforcement, the proposal could be strengthened. In the debate that followed, several topics were raised, including the advantages and disadvantages of allowing the use of bigger trucks, road safety, technology neutrality, the effect on modal shift, increased wear and tear of roads and the specificities of some Member States.

[Procedure file](#)

Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 and Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) 1315/2013

Reporting back to committee on the negotiations (Rule 74(3))

Co-rapporteurs: Barbara Thaler (PPE)

Dominique Riquet (Renew)

The Rapporteurs informed Members on the 3rd trilogue which took place on 2 October, continuing the negotiations on the revised TEN-T Regulation with the Spanish Presidency of the Council.

While a number of technical points were cleared, no concrete progress could yet be made on the key political issues relating to governance of the network and its corridors, exemption clauses for Member States, implementing powers of the Commission, and delays in project implementation. The Rapporteurs pointed out the constructive exchanges with the Presidency, which should also stimulate discussions in Council with a view to possible compromises. The negotiations should thus be continued in order to work towards a possible agreement still during the Spanish Presidency. The next trilogue is scheduled for 14 November.

[Procedure file](#)

Meeting of 25-26 October 2023

Vote on Laying down measures to strengthen solidarity and capacities in the Union to detect, prepare for and respond to cybersecurity threats and incidents

Adoption of draft opinion

Rapporteur: Gheorghe Falcă (PPE)

Result of the vote: 38 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions

[Procedure file](#)

Workshop on Combined transport by the Policy Department

In the TRAN Committee meeting on Wednesday, 25 October, a workshop took place on Combined transport's role in the decarbonisation of transport.

The presentations covered the following topics:

- (i) Intermodal and combined transport: past trends and EU regulatory framework (Mr Guido Fara, Auditor, European Court of Auditors)
- (ii) Scenarios for promoting combined transport and decarbonising transport overall (Ms Lisa Löbbling, senior consultant at d-fine GmbH)
- (iii) Combined transport in the context of TEN-T (Mr Efraim Larrera, Senior researchers, Multicriteria planning)
- (iv) Case studies: the challenges for shippers and freight operators (Mr Thierry Vanelslander, Professor, Department of Transport and Regional Economics, University of Antwerp)

The presentations are available here:

<https://research4committees.blog/2023/10/26/digest-workshop-on-combined-transport-role-in-the-decarbonisation-of-transport/>

Public hearing on Aviation sector in the aftermath of COVID-19 crisis and increasing the safety of passengers in air transport in order to respect their rights and the reduced schedule of air traffic

On 25 October, TRAN committee held a public hearing on the aviation sector in the aftermath of COVID-19 to address the subject from the perspective of aircraft manufacturers, airlines, air navigation service providers, and passengers' rights.

Ms Nathalie Errard (AIRBUS) who spoke on behalf aircraft manufacturers noted that resilient aviation required a collective reflection on a safe and reasonable protocol involving all segments of the industry. She observed that the pandemic acted as a catalyst for decarbonisation of the sector and underlined the importance of sustainable aviation fuel, including incentives for its producers. While endorsing multimodality in principle, Ms Errard insisted that criticisms towards aviation were not always justified, especially from the point of view of circularity, and stressed that the industry continued attracting some of the biggest young talent in engineering.

Ms Sýlvía Kristín Ólafsdóttir (A4E) who represented airlines indicated that, during the pandemic, aviation encountered stricter constraints than ground transport. Now averaging above 90%, compared to 2019 levels, air traffic numbers were performing well; however problems remained for punctuality of flights. Recalling that successful recovery required avoiding uncoordinated action and strengthening passenger confidence, Ms Ólafsdóttir stressed that connectivity and affordable air travel were vital.

Mr Johnny Pring (CANSO), who spoke on behalf of air navigation service providers, observed that the challenges on their path to recovery included cost efficiency (charges to airspace users) and capacity (investment in infrastructure and staff). He deplored that the post-COVID recovery of air navigation service providers was heavily affected by the war in Ukraine. Mr Pring noted that their future recovery actions

aimed at industry optimisation, including sustainability, digitalisation, and enhanced safety.

Commenting on the current state of passengers' rights, Ms Berger (BEUC) stressed that non-respect of these rights – a systemic issue already before the pandemic – was only exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID-19. He noted that a significant part of the caseload dealt with by national and European courts concerned air travel. Therefore, it was important to focus on effective complaint channels and complaint handling procedures as well as truly dissuasive sanctions, in other words – to follow a more ambitious consumer protection agenda.

In response, Members acknowledged the importance of connectivity and the role of aviation in ensuring the continuity of trade during the pandemic. However, in its aftermath aviation had to be ready for change, including in terms of extensive digitalisation, sustainability, security, adequate working conditions and better protection of passengers' rights.

Execution of driving disqualifications with a Union-wide effect

Consideration of amendments

Rapporteur: Petar Vitanov (S&D)

Members discussed the 130 AMs tabled to the file and the 6 compromises negotiated so far that cover its most essential elements. There was a very wide support for the compromises with the exception of two: one on the speeding derogation and another on the issue of demerit points, which are the two more politically points challenging. The TRAN vote is scheduled for 29 Nov.

[Procedure file](#)

Driving licences, amending Directive (EU) 2022/2561 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulation (EU) No 383/2012

Consideration of amendments

Rapporteur: Karima Delli (Verts/ALE)

The Rapporteur presented the start of the discussions on Driving Licences Directive (hereafter DLD) reform, explained her position and listed areas where compromises seemed feasible. The presentation caused a lively discussion among Members, who stressed the most important points to be covered by the DLD. The most debated questions were related to the demerit point system; the introduction of “B+” driving licence; setting administrative validity limits for driving licences for elderly people and the minimum age for accompanied driving scheme. Some Shadow rapporteurs noticed progress in negotiations and agreed to work further in order to reach a compromise.

[Procedure file](#)

Exchange of views on "Women in Transport" with Ms Elisabeth Kotthaus, the representative of the European Commission (DG MOVE) in charge of the Gender Equality in Transport

This exchange of views was part of the European Week of Gender Equality in the European Parliament organized by the FEMM Committee.

During her presentation Ms Elisabeth Kotthaus (Head of Unit for Social Affairs, Passengers’ Rights and Equal Opportunities in DG MOVE) pointed out that, in the transport sector, only 22% of workers are women. Therefore, DG MOVE and European Commission have put in place several initiatives in the framework of the Intelligent Mobility Strategy 2020 and the Gender Equality Strategy to make the transport sector more attractive for young people and women.

Ms Blandine Mollard (Researcher at the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)), shared some insights from the Gender Equality Index report 2023 published on 23 October, first highlighting findings on how gender aspects are important for transport design and then focusing on women working in the transport sector.

Members took the floor and asked the Commission what steps could be taken by the EP to support promoting girls’ and women’s rights and gender equality especially in transport. Members also noted the need to enhance the value of women's work in the transport sector and, above all, the need for legislation and concrete action by the Commission.

In her reply Ms Kotthaus, highlighted the importance of gender equality and inclusivity in this critical sector. The Commission was working towards implementing policies that promote equal opportunities, equal pay for equal work, absence of violence, safe working conditions, and fair representation of women in decision-making positions. There are still barriers and challenges that women face in transport, from underrepresentation in leadership positions to safety concerns for female passengers and workers. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders. To increase the participation of women in transport, Ms Kotthaus suggested to focus on education and empowerment. This included encouraging girls to pursue STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields and providing training and support for women already in the industry to have visible role models.

In her reply to Members Ms Mollard stressed how important the impact of several recent policy developments could be for gender equality at large and for all working women, with a potentially significant impact in transport. Amongst others, she referred to the Work Life Balance Directive, which, by granting new labour rights to workers with caring responsibilities, offers concrete opportunities to redress the systemic unequal sharing of care within the family.

Presentation of a study on "Chinese investments in European maritime transport infrastructure"

Two experts presented a recent study drawn up at the request of the TRAN Committee on the implications of Chinese investments in maritime transport infrastructure. They started by giving an overview of Chinese acquisitions and greenfield projects in European ports with particular reference to 3 detailed case studies (covering the ports of Piraeus/Greece, Hamburg/Germany and the Kumport Terminal/Turkey). While the experts highlighted some benefits emanating from these investments in terms of job creation and modernisation of port infrastructure, they also identified substantial risks, particularly in terms of economic coercion and cyber/data security.

Subsequently, the authors presented a number of policy recommendations for measures at EU level to address these risks, such as further research and data

collection, a cybersecurity risk mitigation strategy, contingency plans for conflict scenarios, improved EU screening of inbound investments and the introduction of an EU maritime cabotage law. Members welcomed the study and expressed support for some of the proposed measures. The study will inform discussions on an ongoing own-initiative report by the TRAN Committee (“Building a comprehensive European port strategy”) covering the same subject, which is due to be adopted in December.

Tourism Task Force update

Tourism Task Force meeting: Exchange of views with stakeholders on Tourism aspects of the revision of the Package Travel Directive

The experts, representing the travel industry and consumers, expressed their expectations for the reform of the Package travel directive (hereafter PTD), which had demonstrated its shortcomings during the recent crises, related to Thomas Cook, COVID - 19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The presentations were followed by a lively discussion, covering a variety of suggestions for improvement, including the necessity to ensure legal certainty during crises, importance of a fair balance between consumers and service providers’ rights, alignment of PTD with the passenger rights regulations, as well as adjusting PTD to changing travel patterns.

Next TRAN Committee meeting is planned for 16 of November 2023 (Brussels)

Useful links

- [TRAN website](#)
- [TRAN Meetings calendar 2023](#)
- [Policy Department Publication in the EP](#)
- [European Aviation Safety Agency newsletters](#)
- [European Railway Agency newsletters](#)
- [European Maritime Safety Agency newsletters](#)
- [SESAR Joint Undertaking news](#)
- [European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency](#)
- [DG MOVE](#)
- [Spanish Presidency of the Council](#)



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