

Response to pandemic is vital for the sustainable future of the transport sector

- EP to process latest transport support measures under urgency procedure
- MEPs reiterate the need for a recovery strategy for the sector
- Debate with Timmermans: recovery plan should save jobs and at the same time make the transition to sustainability

Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee discussed with the Commission urgent relief measures for the transport sector, while reiterating the need for an EU-wide recovery strategy.

The response to the COVID-19 crisis dominated the Transport and Tourism Committee's discussion with Executive Vice-President Timmermans about the future of the transport sector and the European Green Deal.

The debate was followed by a Commission presentation on the latest [COVID-19 outbreak relief measures](#) for the sector that aim to provide more flexibility by temporarily removing administrative barriers and burdens.

COVID-19 relief measures for the transport sector

Transport Committee MEPs supported the urgency procedure for proposed measures. However, they noted also that there is a need for greater transparency and deliberation before rushing any legislative proposals through:

1. **Aviation:** Contracts with ground-handling services should be flexible, as should modified air carrier licensing rules. The measure mostly received support in the debate.
2. **Maritime:** Ports should be able to defer, reduce or lift port infrastructure charges for port users. Many MEPs underlined that it is not clear who would benefit from this proposal and it is difficult to see its added value in a very competitive environment. This might cause unfair competition. The Commission said that it remains an optional tool to provide additional flexibility and keep supply lanes open.
3. **Rail:** the deadline to transpose EU law on rail safety and interoperability should be extended. Transport Committee MEPs agree with the extension; however, the timeframe remains under discussion.

4. Relieving the **administrative** burden: the validity of certain certificates and licences should be extended by providing temporary derogation from 15 legal acts. Many MEPs supported the changes by the Council, i.e. for the less affected member states to opt out from the relief measures.

The MEPs also reiterated the need for a coordinated approach to easing COVID-19 lockdown measures as well as the need for additional support measures for both the transport and tourism sectors.

Debate with Executive Vice-President Timmermans on the future of transport and the Green Deal

Most of the remarks and questions on the future of the transport sector were related to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans acknowledged that transforming the transport sector is essential to the success of the European Green Deal. “COVID-19 or not, there is still a climate crisis. That will not go away. We have to do everything we can to stop the temperatures rising”, he said. “We want to make sure that, in the recovery plan, we save jobs and at the same time make the transition to sustainability. We will have to invest as much as possible at the EU and national level. This is the most challenging part of our mandate.”

Many MEPs raised doubts about whether a strong economy is compatible with a fair transition to sustainability. “Can we afford a green deal in this crisis? There is no contradiction between the need to recover economically and to do it in line with the Green Deal. We cannot succumb to short-term expediency”, explained the Executive Vice-President, adding that it is already evident that investments into sustainable energy now outpace the investments in old energy.

Several questions also tackled the loss of jobs in the **car industry**, the lack of **infrastructure** for electric vehicles, the **aviation** sector’s struggles in the current crisis and a possible additional tax burden, the importance of **rail** transport, as well as rethinking transport systems in **cities**.

[Catch up with the debate by VOD](#)

Further information

[European Parliament: The EU's response to the coronavirus](#)

[European Commission: overview of transport measures taken across the EU:](#)

[European Commission: Coronavirus: package of measures to support transport sector](#)

[Council press release: COVID-19: Council agrees its positions on transport relief measures](#)

[A European Green Deal](#)

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