

Meeting of DG Henrik Hololei with CLECAT

Wednesday 4 May 2016, 10:00-10:45

MOVE Participants:

HH + [REDACTED] A.2 Aviation Security Unit

CLECAT Participants:

Ms Nicolette van der Jagt, Director General

[REDACTED] (security and aviation)

[REDACTED] (UPS, [REDACTED])

Although the meeting had as main subject the Land and Air Security, it covered mainly aspects related to Road and Rail Transport, with a limited coverage of Maritime (amendment of IMO-SOLAS on weighing of containers) and Aviation Security (Pre-Load Advance Cargo Information).

Road Freight Transport

Discussions were held on issues related to Road Transport (freight on board of trucks) linked to the Road Package and the added value of some elements such as the digitalisation and telematics of procedures and devices used by the sector in the different areas (road tolls, tachometers, border controls/checkpoints), where the industry calls for more efficiency, effectiveness and facilitations for the transport of freight.

CLECAT asked how much the Commission can influence Member States in an attempt to harmonise the different national policies and positions.

HH made clear that while harmonisation and common understanding of the issues are at all times objectives to pursue, however, there are limits when it comes to national legal frameworks in some areas. We must see the digitalisation and its added value on a wider perspective also in the context of all other modes of transport.

The parties discussed on the issue of road/motorway tolls with reference, for example, to:

- the link with the use of the related revenues to finance development and maintenance of roads
- the road concessions that may contribute to have better quality roads
- the possibility to have electronic/satellite-based pay-toll devices capable to account the tolls charged by different road authorities along the same itinerary, so to facilitate the obstacles posed by current scenario.

The participants agreed on the need to foster and reinforce competitiveness through common harmonised understanding and interpretation of the rules, while maintaining consideration of the social sensitivity of the road sector.

Other items covered still on the road freight transport were on:

- cabotage rules and on freight forwarders professional/financial criteria required by Member States, where CLECAT highlighted the tendency of MS to have a more strict approach on such rules resulting in loss of competitiveness. On CLECAT question whether there was need to further regulate on the matter, HH repeated that there is no room for such initiative by the Commission.
- Possible support to Long Trucks also in the context of measure the CO2 emissions impact, in consideration of the still pending difficulties affecting the rail freight transport that is still missing to achieve the desired outcomes.

On bottlenecks and issues related to the existing and re-established border controls between member States, CLECAT asked for possible actions by the Institutions, also in consideration of the impact that such scenario has in terms of driving time limits and other operational/legal issues.

HH clarified that while facilitation is a key element to be borne in mind, border control is an issue within the remits of national authorities of Member States.

CLECAT suggested the possibility to establish best practices in the area of facilitation, which would be of course welcomed by the Commission.

Rail Freight Transport

HH agreed that there is significant room for improvement in a sector still affected by monopoly issues and no clear separation and independency between the owner of the rail infrastructure (very often coinciding with or under the control of the government) and the rail carriers, preventing an effective competitiveness and free access by operators and carriers under the same conditions.

Volume of freight transported by rail has marginally increased compared to the expectations, and such situation appears unacceptable considering the efforts put in place by the EU and all the involved actors.

On the Long Truck support as indicated above, HH informed that Long Truck has never been taken off the agenda of discussion. However, there is no appetite for dedicated effort or support, and it would distract from more important and worthwhile items to discuss and to develop.

CLECAT called for a more serious and thorough consideration of elements such Key Performance Indicators, opening and sharing of data, as these are issues to be solved if we want to achieve the progress we aimed for in the development of freight transport by rail. HH confirmed the commitment of Commission to such ideas and principles, and asked the rail freight community to provide their support.

Maritime

On maritime, the parties discussed on the consequences of the amendment of IMO-SOLAS on weighing of containers. As indicated in the briefing provided, HH informed CLECAT on the latest outcomes and the current position of Member States on the matter.

It was stressed the need for more coordination and coherent position of MS individually and as a block when negotiating policy in the different for a that have subsequent impact on EU policy and obligations for States and operators engaged in the maritime sector.

Aviation Security

Due to the lack of time, aviation security discussions briefly covered only the topic of PLACI (Pre-Load Advance Cargo Information) where Commission provided an overview of the current situation at EU and at international level, as well as on the next steps. The Commission thanked CLECAT for its contribution on common risk criteria and provided reassurances that the involvement of operators will always be in the agenda of DG MOVE on this topic.

On the operational implications related to the submission of information, CLECAT called for the establishment by all regulators (for different purposes) of a single point of submission of data/information. The Commission agreed on the principle, although such achievement may be too ambitious at the moment and could pursued at a later stage, as it requires a significant effort by different regulators in all Member States, as well as the willingness to share data for multiple purposes and in different format.

CLECAT recommended that live operational tests be carried out before any decision on how the PLACI is implemented is taken. The Commission confirmed that the dialogue with the industry is a key element for regulators and operational feasibility will be always born in mind when designing the regime.



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