

Speech: EU Transport Council 7 June 2018

I attended the only formal Transport Council under the Bulgarian Presidency (the Presidency) in Luxembourg on Thursday 7th June.

The Council reached a general approach on a proposal to revise the current Regulation on safeguarding connectivity and competition in international air transport, which is intended to provide protection against subsidisation and unfair pricing practices in the supply of air services from non-EU countries. During the discussion, I emphasised the importance of connectivity, consumer choice and avoiding market distortions.

Following this, the Council adopted the Presidency's proposal for a general approach on the directive on port reception facilities. I supported the aim to further protect the marine environment against illegal discharges of waste from ships and to ensure the efficiency of maritime operation in ports, and recognised that concerns raised by the UK had been addressed.

Next, the Presidency presented a progress report on the revised rail passengers' rights and obligations regulation, which was noted by the Council.

Following this, the Council considered a number of files in phase one of the mobility package (published in May 2017). Firstly, the Presidency concluded that the Council had reached a general approach on the compromise proposal on the revised European electronic road tolling services ('EETS') directive, on which I voiced my support. Next, when considering the proposed directive on hired goods vehicles, the Presidency observed it did not have sufficient support for a general approach and concluded that the Council was unable to adopt the proposal. In the discussion, I noted that the UK supported the general approach, but acknowledged that other member states wanted further discussion.

Over lunch, ministers discussed the financing of infrastructure projects in the EU and connectivity in the Western Balkans.

Following this, the Presidency presented progress reports on the remaining elements of phase one of the mobility package, covering proposals designed to improve the clarity and enforcement of the EU road transport market (the 'market pillar'), and proposals on the application of social legislation in road transport (the 'social pillar'). I outlined the outstanding areas of concern for the UK and committed to working constructively toward a general approach and deal moving forward.

Next, the Presidency presented 2 progress reports on proposals from phase two of the mobility package (published November 2017). The Presidency provided updates on the proposal to amend the current combined transport directive, which aims to encourage and facilitate modal shift away from the roads and

onto alternative means of transport, and to reduce congestion, and the clean and energy-efficient vehicles directive.

Under any other business, several items were discussed. Notably, Commissioner Bulc presented the third and final mobility package proposals, which focused on safety and technology in transport. Commissioner Bulc also presented an action plan on military mobility; in reply to Luxembourg, she confirmed that a range of actions were being pursued under the EU cycling strategy and, in reply to Finland, set out plans for an upcoming public consultation on summertime arrangements. Furthermore, Sweden noted the 18 to 19 June summit on connected and autonomous vehicles in Gothenburg; and Austria presented transport plans for its incoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Regarding bilateral engagement, I met with Commissioner Bulc and my ministerial counterparts from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Malta, Poland and Romania.