

Statement to Parliament: EU Transport Council: agenda for 5 December 2017

I will attend the only formal Transport Council under the Estonian Presidency (the Presidency) taking place in Brussels on Tuesday 5 December (2017).

The first item on the agenda will be a progress report on phase one of the mobility package, focusing on 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').

Following this, the Presidency has proposed a policy debate on the 'charging pillar' of the package. The proposals to amend the existing directives on HGV road tolls and user charges ('Eurovignette') and the interoperability of electronic road toll systems (EETS) set out rules for charging vehicles using the road (but do not mandate such charging) and promote better functioning of charging across national barriers.

Next, there will be a progress report on the proposed amendment to the regulation on safeguarding competition in air transport. The proposal aims to tackle discriminatory practices and address perceived deficiencies in the existing legislation by allowing complaints to be made to the European Commission by a wider range of interested parties who suspect, or have evidence that, one or more EU carriers are being harmed by the unfair practices of a third country.

The council will adopt conclusions on the progress on Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). The conclusions do not place any binding requirements on member states. They recognise the value that the TEN-T Policy and CEF (the associated funding programme) bring to EU transport infrastructure and look to strengthen transport investment in the next EU budgeting period. The UK can support these conclusions.

Conclusions will also be adopted on the digitalisation of transport. 'Digital Europe' has been a priority for the Estonian Presidency and the conclusions highlight the potential and challenges for the digitalisation of transport and, amongst other things, call on the commission to develop a comprehensive and multimodal digitalisation strategy for the transport sector during the first quarter of 2019. The UK can support their adoption.

Next, the council will adopt conclusions on mid-term evaluation of the Galileo, EGNOS and European GNSS Agency. We welcome these conclusions and, in particular, the need for new recommendations about the future evolution of the programme to be proportionate and costed before they are brought forward for decision.

Under any other business, the commission will first present phase 2 of the

mobility package, which focuses on clean mobility and includes proposals on promotion of clean and energy-efficient vehicles, combined transport of goods, and access to the market for coach and bus services. The presidency will provide information on the state of play on the proposed rail passenger rights regulation. The delegations from Germany, the Commission, Poland, France and Finland will, respectively, provide information on automated cars, implementation of the aviation strategy, World Maritime Days, IMO greenhouse gas emission reduction strategy, and summertime arrangements. The commission will also provide information on military mobility, and finally, the Bulgarian delegation will present the transport work programme of their forthcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union.