

Statement to Parliament: EU Transport Council agenda for 7 June 2018

I will attend the only formal Transport Council under the Bulgarian Presidency (the Presidency) taking place in Luxembourg on Thursday 7 June.

The Council is expected to reach 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. The government places great importance on effective competition and liberalisation as a key enabler of international connectivity and considers that the proposed general approach is satisfactory.

Following this, the Council will be considering a general approach on a proposed directive on port reception facilities. The proposal aims to achieve a higher level of protection of the marine environment by reducing waste discharges at sea, as well as improved efficiency of maritime operations in port by reducing the administrative burden and by updating the regulatory framework. In negotiations, the UK has been generally supportive of the aims of the proposal but required clarification and consideration of the impacts to ensure that the final directive does not disproportionality impose additional or unnecessary burdens. We have also been successful in securing compromise and flexibility within the proposal, to ensure that the improvements to the directive do not unduly burden small ports and small ships.

Next, the Council will consider a number of files in phase one of the mobility package (published in May 2017). Firstly, the Presidency will give a progress report 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').

The Council is expected to reach general approaches on 2 of the proposals in the package. The first of these is a proposal to revise the current directive on the European electronic road tolling service ('EETS'). The UK views the proposals for a revised EETS directive favourably. The proposal contains provisions that will assist the enforcement of toll and road user charge collection. The second is a proposal on goods vehicles hired without drivers, which is intended to make it easier for undertakings to hire vehicles registered in a member state other than that where the undertaking is established. This is not a matter with significant practical implications for the UK given the relative rarity of operators hiring goods vehicles in this way in the UK. We are content for both of these general approaches to be agreed.

Following this, the Presidency has prepared 2 progress reports on proposals from phase 2 of the mobility package (published November 2017). The

Presidency will provide an update on the state of play thus far on proposals to amend the current directive on combined transport, which aims to encourage and facilitate modal shift away from the roads and onto alternative means of transport and reduce congestion, and the proposal to broaden the scope of the current directive on clean and energy-efficient vehicles, where the UK is leading the transition to cleaner road transport.

Next, there will be a progress report on the proposed revision to the regulation on rail passengers' rights and obligations. The UK shares the Commission's objective of strengthening the rights of rail passengers. We therefore support in principle the proposal's aim of standardising and improving passenger rights, including by improving access for people with disabilities or reduced mobility.

Under any other business, the Commission will present phase 3 of the mobility package (published May 2018), followed by information on the action plan for military mobility, and an update on the implementation of the EU cycling strategy. The delegations from Sweden and Greece will then provide information on automated and connected driving and functioning of the fair competition framework in the aviation sector within the EU, respectively. The Commission will then provide information on the state of play for EU summer-time arrangements, and finally, the Austrian delegation will present the transport work programme of their forthcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union.