

# 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.

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## **Press release: Welsh business visits Downing Street ahead of Small Business Saturday**

One of the small businesses selected for the event, Airpix Aerial Images combines nature with state of the art technology – providing aerial filming to capture the beautiful coastlines and valleys of Wales.

The business also provides services in industries ranging from surveying, to construction and engineering.

### **Airpix Aerial Images' founder, Jeremy Laugharne, said:**

I'm so excited and still flying high about my invitation to 10 Downing Street. SmallBiz100 is a great way for businesses to connect with one another, and share unique and individual ideas. It also helps small businesses develop themselves and get valuable exposure.

The UK has 5.7 million small businesses and last year customers spent £717 million with small firms on Small Business Saturday alone.

The businesses were welcomed by Stephen Barclay, Economic Secretary to the Treasury and Baroness Fairhead CBE, Minister of State at the Department for International Trade.

### **Stephen Barclay said:**

It's been great to welcome so many business owners to Number 10 to show our appreciation for the crucial contribution they make to

Britain.

Small businesses are vital to a thriving and competitive economy that is fit for the future, so it's great to see that the number of small businesses in the UK has been growing in recent years. We hope the country will join us in championing the UK's small businesses, and support them this Saturday.

## **Further information**

Business Population Estimates:

BEIS published the annual Business Population Estimates on 30 November. These statistics detail the number of businesses, including small businesses, in the UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/business-population-estimates-2017>

Small Business Saturday:

Small Business Saturday is a grassroots, not-for-profit campaign, originally founded by American Express in the U.S. in 2010, which remains the principal supporter of the campaign in the UK as part of its on-going commitment to encourage consumers to shop small. The campaign also benefits from the backing of leading business organisations including the Federation of Small Businesses and Enterprise Nation.

Small Business Saturday takes place on the first Saturday in December each year, but the campaign aims to have a lasting impact on small businesses. In 2017 Small Business Saturday is on Saturday, December 2nd.

To learn more, visit [smallbusinessaturdayuk.com](http://smallbusinessaturdayuk.com)

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## **[News story: 1 January 2018: Update to the Patent Cooperation Treaty \(PCT\) fees](#)**

The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) fee structure changes on 1 January 2018.

The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) fee structure changes on 1 January 2018 and are as follows:

**Transmittal fee:**

## **Search fee:**

## **International fee:**

- £1,029 for the first 30 sheets
- £12 for each sheet over 30

## **Restoration for restoration of priority**

## **Reductions for e-filing**

- £155: electronic filing (not being in character coded format)
- £232: electronic filing (being in character coded format)

## **Fees for preparation of priority document**

## **PCT forms**

## **Further information**

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# **[Press release: Blue Belt extended to protect rare seabirds](#)**

Nearly 150,000 rare seabirds – including the iconic little tern and black-throated diver – will be better protected as the UK's 'Blue Belt' of marine protected areas extends by over 650 square miles, Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey announced today.

A newly classified marine [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#) will come into force along a 24 mile stretch of coast from Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay in Cornwall. The area – equivalent to almost 55,000 football pitches – is the UK's most important site for the wintering black throated diver. This new protection will help to minimise disturbance to the feeding areas and marine habitats the birds rely on, providing a safe haven where they can spend the winter.

A further marine SPA has been announced in the Irish Sea between the Isle of Man and Anglesey – home to over 12,000 Manx shearwaters – while four other sites have been extended around the UK, ranging from Liverpool Bay in the north-west of England, Poole Harbour on the south coast, and the Outer Thames Estuary near London.

Marine SPAs are sites given special status to protect populations of rare, vulnerable and migratory birds. These latest designations will help to safeguard the feeding grounds of over one quarter of the UK's breeding population of little terns and bring the UK's total number of marine SPAs to 106.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Like the millions of others watching Blue Planet II, I am only too aware of the importance of protecting our precious marine environment, and the wildlife that relies on healthy and productive seas.

The UK is already a world leader in marine conservation, with over 23 per cent of our waters protected, and these new sites will help to strengthen our Blue Belt and give rare seabirds like the little tern a brighter future.

Natural England's Chairman Andrew Sells said:

Extending the Blue Belt gives vital new protection to some of our most precious coastal wildlife. Terns and Manx shearwaters, with their dramatic aerial displays, are a magnificent sight above our seas.

These Special Protection Areas will provide havens for nearly 150,000 birds that breed on our shores in summer or flock there in autumn and winter, helping them to thrive into the future.

The SPAs will afford protection to a range of species, including three species of breeding tern: little tern, Sandwich tern and common tern – all of which are “amber listed” because of factors such as declines in the size or range of their breeding populations. The sites also include the first SPA in the UK for wintering black-throated diver, great northern diver and Eurasian spoonbill, and the first offshore SPA to protect the feeding grounds of Manx shearwater.

The sites form part of the government's ongoing commitment to create a 'Blue Belt' of protected areas around the UK's coast – with over 23 per cent of UK waters already protected and with more than 300 sites across the UK.

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## **[News story: Government backs small businesses in transport sector](#)**

Cyclists and commuters are set to benefit from government funding for smaller businesses, as firms across the country celebrate Small Business Saturday today (2 December 2017).

Over 50 small and medium-sized businesses in the transport sector have

already received funding to kick-start innovative projects, through the [Transport Technology Research Innovation Grant \(T-TRIG\)](#).

This includes a business helping blind and partially-sighted people navigate towns and cities, and a company that has developed an electronic motor which can be fixed to bikes.

Now firms will have the opportunity to bid for funding through the next round of the T-TRIG scheme, set up to support innovation.

T-TRIG funds early-stage research projects with the aim of helping to create a better transport system. This is one of the ways the government is supporting businesses and entrepreneurs across the UK.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

Many pioneering and innovative transport companies are ready to put their ideas into practice and I am pleased that firms will have another opportunity to bid for funding through the T-TRIG programme.

We want to tap into ground-breaking ideas for the benefit of passengers across the country, and I look forward to hearing about the next round of projects.

Some of the businesses funded through the last round of T-TRIG include:

- Wayfindr: a system that helps blind and partially sighted people navigate towns and cities using Bluetooth-enabled beacons and smartphones
- Biella Research: a bike share docking station, allowing cyclists to stack more bikes in the same station to make the most of the space available
- Simply Connect: a platform to manage public transport on demand, using people-carrier-sized vehicles
- DriverNet: an app that prevents delays for delivery vehicles
- Pushme Inc: an electronic motor which can be attached to any conventional bicycle in seconds, leading to faster commuting times

Charles Carey, director at Biella Research, said:

Biella Research is a fast, agile development company, developing a high density stack rack for bicycles. We needed to test a prototype in a real world environment, with real users, and the T-TRIG grant proved invaluable in funding this and justifying further pre-commercial development following a successful outcome.

Ant Chisnall, CEO of DriverNet, said:

DriverNet is a smart logistics app for drivers that reduces delays, damage and emissions during deliveries.

The T-TRIG award enabled us to build our prototype and successfully prove our concept during a trial with Kuehne and Nagel. We used this platform to secure Innovate UK funding to continue our R&D to help us reach the market early in 2018.

Neil Brown, CEO of Simply Connect, said:

Simply Connect was delighted to receive T-TRIG funding from DfT at a critical stage in our development. Without this support, we would not have been able to progress our business: we are now in Scottish Enterprise's 'Growth Pipeline' as a digital business with high-growth potential, and following successful initial trials in Exeter in 2017, will launch a 20 vehicle service in Manchester in spring 2018.

[Business Population Estimates published this week](#) show that the UK has an extra 196,000 small businesses compared to 2016. This takes the total of small businesses in the UK to 5.7 million.

For more information about government support available to small businesses, contact our [business helplines](#).