



## Department for Transport

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### **AUSTRIAN PRESIDENCY FORWARD LOOK - TRANSPORT**

As you will know, the UK continues to engage in normal EU business until exit negotiations are concluded. I am therefore writing to inform you of our expectations for the transport agenda during the Austrian Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers.

Following the example of recent presidencies, Austria will hold only one Transport Council which will take place on 3 December in Brussels. They are also planning a number of other events, including a European Aviation Summit on 3-4 October in Vienna and an Informal meeting of Transport and Environment ministers in Graz on 29-30 October, the agenda for which is likely to include clean mobility, alternative fuels, road safety and multi-modality.

The Presidency's focus is on the move towards sustainable, fair, competitive and safe transport systems, and they are applying their motto of 'A Europe That Protects' to the field of road safety. In negotiations, their main focus will be on land transport and all three phases of the Mobility Package.

In more detail:

## Land

In the area of land transport, the Presidency's priority will be to take forward some of the outstanding proposals from the first phase of the Mobility Package on **market access and access to professions** (EM 9668/17) from the Market Pillar, and the Social Pillar proposals on **driving times and rest periods, tachographs**, controls of social legislation, and the **posting of workers** (EM 9670/17 and 9671/17) in the transport sector. The Presidency hopes to analyse and build on the progress made during the Bulgarian Presidency on critical issues to try to find out where compromises may be possible, and hopes to be able to achieve General Approaches by the December Transport Council.

For the road charging pillar, however, the Presidency will give less priority to the proposal on **Eurovignette** (EM 9672/17, 10175/17) which will be the subject of a progress report only, and they will not take forward the proposal on **Hired Goods Vehicles** from the market pillar (9669/17).

Following the General Approach reached at the June Transport Council on the proposed Directive on the interoperability of the **European electronic toll service** (9673/170), the Presidency will open trilogue discussions with the European Parliament to try to reach a final deal.

The Presidency do not propose to take forward discussions on the proposal from the second phase of the Mobility Package to amend **Regulation 1073/2009 on coach and bus transport** (EM 14184/17), which is now unlikely to be agreed during the term of the current European Commission.

Austria would like to make progress with the proposals on safe mobility from the third phase of the Mobility Package, including a possible General Approach or progress report at the 3 December Transport Council on the proposed Directive on **road infrastructure safety management** (9040/18).

Land transport working group meetings will be predominantly dedicated to Mobility Package proposals, however the Austrians will also resume working group discussion on **Rail Passenger rights** (EM 12442/17) in September, and aim to reach a substantial Progress Report at the December Transport Council. They also plan to reach an EU position ahead of the **OTIF General Assembly** which will be held on 25-26 September. A vote on this is expected by 18 September at the latest.

The Presidency will also need to reach Council Conclusions on the recent Court of Auditors' **report on high-speed trains** (unnumbered EM), and these Conclusions are expected to be agreed at a Council in September or October.

Finally, we expect that the Austrian Presidency will begin negotiations on the proposal to amend the **Motor Insurance Directive** (EM 9365/18) in September.

## **Aviation**

You will recall that a General Approach was reached at the June Transport Council on the proposed **Safeguarding Competition in Air Transport Regulation** ('Regulation 868', EM 9744/17 and 10146/17). Austria aims to reach a final agreement with the European Parliament on the proposal and plans to hold four trilogue discussions to try to reach a draft deal.

The Presidency will aim to reach a General Approach on the proposed amendment to Regulation 1008/2008 on the **wet leasing of aircraft** (EM 15777/16) and aims to reach a final deal with the European Parliament by the end of the year.

Further work on agreements with third countries will also be taken forward, including setting a mandate for the Commission to negotiate **air transport agreements** with **Oman** and **Mexico**.

## **Maritime**

Following the General Approach agreed during the Bulgarian Presidency, the Austrians will begin trilogue negotiations with the European Parliament on the proposed Directive on **Port Reception Facilities** (EM 5454/18) with a view to reaching a final deal by the December Transport Council.

The Presidency will take forward negotiations on the new Mobility Package III proposal for the **EU Maritime Single Window** (9051/18), and are aiming to reach a General Approach on it at the December Transport Council. The Austrians will be keen to make progress on the proposal to amend the **seafarer training** (STCW) Directive (EM 9123/18), but given the heavy workload in the Shipping working group, they are likely to seek a substantive Progress Report at the December Transport Council instead of a General Approach.

If time allows, the Austrians will also aim to make progress on the Council Recommendation on **Small Craft Code** (9113/18), however this may well fall to the Romanians to take forward under their Presidency from 1 January 2019.

On Inland Waterways the Austrians will seek a set of Council Conclusions to promote continuation of the **NAIADES** programme, which seeks to create the conditions for inland navigation transport to become a quality mode of transport and to encourage modal shift of freight from road to inland waterways. We expect working group discussions on this to take place in September and October.

### **Intermodal**

The Presidency will resume negotiations on the **Combined Transport** proposal (EM 14213/17) from the second phase of the Mobility Package and is aiming for a General Approach at the December Transport Council. The Presidency will also aim for a General Approach at the December Transport Council on the on the new Mobility Package III proposal for a Regulation on **electronic freight transport information** (9060/18).

Negotiations will also open on the proposal to repeal and replace the Regulation on the **Connecting Europe Facility** (CEF, EM 9951/18). Given the transport, telecoms and energy interest, the Presidency will aim to reach partial General Approaches or give progress reports at the Transport Council on 3 December and the Telecommunications Council on 4 December. The Austrians hope to make significant progress and will aim for either a partial General Approach or a progress report at the December Transport Council on the proposed Mobility Package phase II proposal to amend the current Directive on the promotion of **clean and energy-efficient vehicles** (EM 14183/17).

We expect the Austrians to dedicate ample working group time to the proposed '**Smart TEN-T**' Regulation (EM 9075/18) from the third phase of the Mobility Package, but with a likely progress report at the December Transport Council rather than a General Approach.

### **Motor Vehicle technical harmonisation**

Continuing its safety theme, Austria will take forward the proposal for a Regulation on **general and pedestrian safety** (EM 9006/18) from the third phase of the Mobility Package, including a possible General Approach or progress report at the Internal Market and Industry Council on 29 November.

The usual proposals to establish the EU voting position within the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) with respect to vehicle type approval will also be on the table, with the next agreement on an EU position likely to be needed in October.

It is not yet clear whether the Presidency will take forward the Mobility Package phase III proposal to amend Directive 96/53/EC regarding the time limit for the implementation of the special rules on the **maximum length of cabs** (EM 9144/18).

### **Climate Change**

From the second phase of the Mobility Package, the Presidency will seek a General Approach on **emissions from new light commercial vehicles** (EM 14217/17) at the 9 October Environment Council.

I hope that this general summary of our expectations is useful. Further information will, of course, be provided to you in the future on each of these dossiers in line with the usual procedures for Parliamentary scrutiny.

I am writing in similar terms to Sir William Cash, Chair of the Commons European Scrutiny Committee, and am copying this letter to Chris Johnson, Clerk to your Committee, Lynn Gardner, Clerk to the Commons Committee, Arnold Ridout, Legal Adviser to the Commons Committee, Les Saunders, Department for Exiting the European Union, and Margaret Browne, departmental scrutiny coordinator.



**BARONESS SUGG**