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Brussels News

CLECAT MEETS EP TO DISCUSS EU SINGLE WINDOW FOR CUSTOMS



Today, CLECAT took part in a technical session with the European Parliament's Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) to discuss the European Commission's [proposal for EU Single Window Environment for Customs](#). CLECAT stressed that the Single Window project is of particular interest and great importance for the industry, as it aims to provide for streamlined exchange of information and customs controls, ultimately improving trade facilitation. The Single Window

environment has the potential to provide significant benefits for economic operators including simplified processes, time saving, faster clearance and reduction of administrative burden and costs.

CLECAT explained that the Government-to-Government (G2G) element is the most essential part of the Single Window for Customs. It is designed to enhance cooperation and coordination between different authorities involved in goods clearance and make it easier to exchange electronic information submitted by traders. The interconnection between Customs and partner competent authorities will allow the exchange and automatic verification by Customs of supporting documents to the customs declaration that have already been submitted by trade.

If properly designed and implemented, the Business-to-Government (B2G) element could provide great easements for trade by streamlining reporting obligations. The B2G connection will allow economic operators to lodge all the necessary data required by customs and non-customs legislation at a single-entry point. However, while appreciating the significant step forward, CLECAT recognised that there are technical and practical challenges that need to be addressed. A thorough analysis is

required to ensure that the B2G aspect of Single Window is effective, providing for the benefits as originally intended instead of creating unnecessary burdens for economic operators.

CLECAT further highlighted the importance of regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of the implementation of the Single Window environment with involvement of trade, as well as the need to be realistic in the timeline for implementation in light of available capacity and technical feasibility.

CLECAT was a member of the Customs 2020 project group on the EU Single Window Environment for Customs, which aimed to study a possible framework to develop the EU Single Window environment for customs including the legal context.

EP HEARING ON THE IMPACT OF MEGA-VESSELS

On 15 June, CLECAT will participate in an online event organised by MEPs Jutta Paulus (Germany, Greens/EFA) and Vera Tax (the Netherlands, S&D) on the impacts of mega vessels. The recent blockage of the Suez Canal by the 'Ever Given' shed a light on the vulnerability of EU supply chains and raised questions of mega-ships in the liner shipping.

Container ships have grown over recent decades due to a continuous search for economies of scale and contributed to decreasing maritime transport costs that facilitated global trade. However, the increase in container ship sizes has environmental and social consequences for the rest of the transport chain. Big ships require infrastructure adaptations and productivity levels that increase costs for other stakeholders in the supply chain. Moreover, big ships cause peaks in ports and put a strain on hinterland transports. Congestion often becomes inevitable as the hinterland or feeder ships are not always able to absorb the exceptional flow of unloaded containers.

CLECAT already published a [blog post](#) in April 2021 warning about the risks implied by the upscaling of container vessels, especially during the ongoing crisis with unprecedented peaking freight rates and all-time low quality of service. CLECAT will participate in a panel debate on the economic rationale behind big ships, with representatives from Transport & Environment, the European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) and DG COMP. You can register to the event via this [link](#).

Maritime

CLOSING OF YANTIAN PORT LEADS TO MASSIVE DELAYS



Disruptions in and around the key southern China container port of Yantian continue to worsen following the partial closure of the port in response to an outbreak of Covid-19 among terminal staff, with carriers announcing significant disruptions to sailings and schedules and warning of delays for upwards of two weeks.

The congestion at southern China's biggest export container port has resulted in container lines blank sailings or bypassing Yantian and escalating congestion and restrictions at neighbouring Shekou Port in Shenzhen and Nansha Port in Guangzhou. Maersk said that due to the disruptions, '64 vessels,



including our partners' vessels, have omitted the Port of Yantian and Shekou to protect schedule reliability.' The carrier added that 'due to further measures being implemented, increased congestion and vessel delays upwards of 16 days are expected in Yantian port.'

Drewry ports and terminals analyst Eleanor Hadland said that the disruption in China would eventually spill over and disrupt European and North American markets again, commenting: 'We're seeing this contagion spread around the world and there is just a lack of resilience. There is no spare capacity in North America or China to handle this level of disruption.' Logistics visibility specialist Project44 reminded importers from the US and Europe that they 'must remain wary of the overall deterioration of maritime trade lanes originating from China and plan their freight operations accordingly.'

Source: [Lloyd's Loading List](#)

Road

THIRD TRILOGUE ON EUROVIGNETTE DIRECTIVE

The next round of negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council on the Eurovignette Directive will take place on Tuesday 15 June. This will be the last meeting under the Portuguese Presidency of the Council and is perceived as the last chance for the co-legislators to agree on the revision of the Directive. While negotiators already agreed on a number of provisions that have been discussed in informal technical meetings, some political issues need to be resolved in order to reach an agreement:

The Portuguese Presidency reported at the Transport Council on the 3rd of June that the Council has recently concentrated on finding a compromise on the controversial transitional obligation from time-based toll systems (vignettes) to distance-based systems. This is considered as the deal-breaker for the Presidency, as the European Parliament wants to phase out this system completely, whereas some Member States such as Sweden, Austria, Estonia and Latvia call for flexibility for their national (time-based) systems.

The Council's proposal to introduce variation of tolls for heavy-duty vehicles according to their CO2 emissions, backed by the Commission, is still not supported by some political groups in the Parliament. Some MEPs prefer an adjacent emission trading system (ETS) covering road transport. With difficulties to find a majority, there is a growing risk that negotiations will break down without agreement. As a potential consequence, Member States which have toll discounts for electric and hydrogen trucks (e.g. Austria, Germany, Ireland) would not be supported, and other Member States would also not be supported to bring in such discounts (e.g. Denmark, the Netherlands, etc) and the plans for greener vignettes (time-based tolls) would also be lost.

CLECAT urges lawmakers to agree on the revision of the Eurovignette Directive and considers the provision on the variation of tolls for heavy-duty vehicles according to their CO2 emissions vital.

DENMARK TAKEN TO COURT FOR RESTRICTING LORRY PARKING

The European Commission has decided on 9 June to refer Denmark to the Court of Justice of the European Union for failing to lift its restrictions on lorry parking. Denmark has been limiting the period for which lorries can park in state-owned rest areas to a maximum of 25 hours since July 2018.



The Commission considers that the Danish measure restricts the freedom to provide services as guaranteed by EU road transport legislation, by creating barriers to foreign hauliers carrying out international operations. Since these hauliers do not have an operating centre in the country, they need parking space to carry out their activities and to comply with EU obligations on driving and rest times. The restriction on lorry parking makes compliance with those obligation more difficult.

Danish authorities explained during an exchange of letters with the Commission that the restriction was taken in view of the general interest (notably 'ensuring orderly conditions at rest areas' or 'addressing unlawful and hazardous parking'), but the Commission considers it inappropriate and unnecessary as such objectives could be reached by other means, without causing similar adverse effects.

Source: [European Commission](#)

Rail

EC APPROVES ITALIAN STATE AID FOR RAIL FREIGHT

On 10 June, the European Commission approved a €150 million Italian scheme to support both the rail freight sector and the rail commercial passenger sector in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. The measure enables the reduction of the charges paid by rail freight and commercial passenger operators to access rail infrastructure during the period from 1 January to 30 April 2021.

The measure follows the Commission's approval, in [March 2021](#), of a scheme aimed at reducing track access charges during the period from 10 March to 31 December 2020 ([SA.59376](#)). The aim of the measure is to help rail operators coping with the difficult situation caused by the coronavirus outbreak, by preserving their competitiveness as well as the benefits of the shift of traffic from road to rail achieved prior to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Commission assessed the measure under EU state aid rules and found that the measure is proportionate and necessary to achieve the objective pursued, namely, to facilitate the modal shift from road to rail whilst not leading to undue competition distortions. On this basis, the Commission approved the scheme under EU State aid rules.

Source: [European Commission](#)

Air

AIR CARGO DEMAND OUTPERFORMING PRE-COVID LEVELS

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released April 2021 data for global air cargo markets showing that global air cargo demand continued to outperform pre-COVID levels, with demand up 12% compared to April 2019 and 7.8% compared to March 2021. Seasonally adjusted demand is now 5% higher than the pre-crisis August 2018 peak. The strong performance was led by North American



carriers contributing 7.5 percentage points to the 12% growth rate in April. Airlines in all other regions except for Latin America also supported the growth.

Simultaneously, the data shows that capacity remains 9.7% below pre-COVID-19 levels (April 2019) due to the ongoing grounding of passenger aircraft. Airlines continue to use dedicated freighters to fill the lack of available belly capacity. International capacity from dedicated freighters rose 26.2% in April 2021 compared to the same month in 2019, while belly-cargo capacity dropped by 38.5%.

Source: [IATA](#)

Customs and Trade

GET READY FOR NEW E-COMMERCE RULES ON 1 JULY



From 1 July 2021, the new VAT e-commerce package will come into force. The VAT rules on cross-border business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce will change, alongside the customs formalities and processes for importation and exportation of low value consignments. In particular, the EU abolished its VAT de minimis threshold of 22 euro for VAT, meaning that as of 1 July, VAT will apply to all goods entering the EU, regardless of their value. This is to ensure a level playing field for EU businesses. A new form of customs declaration with a super-reduced dataset was

created as a simplification, available for low value consignments of an intrinsic value below 150 euro, whereas for certain goods with prohibitions and restrictions a full declaration will still be required. An electronic portal called the 'Import One Stop Shop' (IOSS) was introduced to facilitate and simplify the declaration and payment of VAT for online sales of goods imported in the EU with a value not exceeding 150 euro.

Additionally, so-called special arrangements were introduced to manage sales done by sellers or platforms that have not registered in the IOSS. Under that scheme, the VAT due upon import will be collected from the buyer upon delivery of the parcel in the country of destination. The collected VAT by operators will be paid on a monthly basis to the relevant authorities.

More information on the new VAT e-commerce rules in the EU, which are coming into force on 1 July, you will find on the official Commission's e-commerce campaign [website](#).

WCO AND OLAF JOIN FORCES TO FIGHT CUSTOMS FRAUD

On 7 June, a new Administrative Cooperation Arrangement was signed between the Secretary General of the World Customs Organization (WCO), Dr Kunio Mikuriya, and the Director-General of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), Ville Itälä, to strengthen the collaboration between the two bodies. The agreement widens a previous agreement from 2003 and focuses on both operational cooperation and information sharing. The 2003 arrangement between the WCO and OLAF covered only the exchange of information on tobacco seizures, while the new agreement will see the exchange of information expanded to cover a wider range of fraudulent activity (counterfeiting, illicit trade in protected species, etc).



It will also help the two bodies to work more closely and effectively together on joint operations in the field. The respective members of the WCO and OLAF will now have access to non-personal data on a larger set of customs fraud cases shared by their counterparts in the EU Member States. This significantly simplifies the sharing of information among customs administrations as it will now be automatically replicated in their different databases and IT systems.

WCO and OLAF frequently cooperate at the operational level, most recently in WCO-led operations [against illegal trafficking linked to the COVID-19 pandemic](#) and [illegal shipments of waste](#) or others coordinated by OLAF on [counterfeit hygiene products](#) and [car parts](#).

Source: [World Customs Organization](#)

Forthcoming Events

CLECAT MEETINGS

CLECAT Maritime Logistics Institute

14 June 2021, Online

CLECAT Board

22 June 2021, Online

CLECAT General Assembly

22 June 2021, Online

CLECAT Rail Logistics Institute

23 June 2021, Online

CLECAT Road Logistics Institute

7 July 2021, Online

CLECAT Air Logistics Institute

14 September 2021, Online

CLECAT Security Institute

14 September 2021, Online

EU MEETINGS

Council of the European Union

Transport Council

9 December 2021, Brussels

Environment Council

20 December 2021, Brussels



European Parliament

European Parliament Transport Committee

16-17 June 2021, Brussels

European Parliament Plenary

23-24 June 2021, Brussels

Contact

Nicolette van der Jagt

Director General CLECAT

Rue du Commerce 77, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium

Tel +32 2 503 4705 / Fax +32 2 503 47 52

E-mail nicolettevdjagt@clecat.org / info@clecat.org

 [@CLECAT_EU](https://twitter.com/CLECAT_EU)

www.CLECAT.org



European Association for Forwarding,
Transport, Logistics and Customs Services

