



Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure • 11030 Berlin

Ministers of Transport of the European Union

Ms Adina Vălean, Member of the European  
Commission, Commissioner for Transport

By email only

Date: Berlin, 27 October 2020  
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Dear colleagues,  
Dear Commissioner,

I would like to thank you most sincerely for your participation in and contributions to the virtual conference of EU transport ministers hosted by the German EU Council Presidency on 8 October 2020. In the following, I would like to sum up the outcomes of the discussion that I regard as most important:

With regard to the **benchmarks of a pandemic and crisis contingency plan for European freight transport**, I found that there was broad consensus on the main points.

The EU Transport Ministers agreed to ask the European Commission to prepare a pandemic and crisis contingency plan for the European transport sector. In doing so, it will be essential to take the distribution of competences between the Member States and the European Union into account, on the one hand, and to provide all levels of government as well as the companies affected with recommendations and non-binding guidelines, on the other hand.

We agreed that the European Commission must also intensively involve the government departments responsible for health and internal affairs at EU and Member State level in order to emphatically promote the interests of the transport sector, including in the context of their areas of responsibility.

We also agree that well coordinated communication and information management are key to successfully overcoming future crises. Making better use of the digital transformation will also play an important role in this. On this note, the Member States ask the European Commission

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to present suggestions on how to make all information that is of relevance to the freight transport sector available quickly and without any administrative burden for the companies via a central online resource. In addition, many Member States highlighted the need to push ahead with the roll-out of the digital consignment note and other documents in a digital format.

The introduction of “green lanes” to ensure the unimpeded movement of goods as well as essential services and the coordination of cross-border transport by the EU-wide network of national contact points have contributed significantly to considerably improving the situation at the internal borders. We are in agreement that this network will have a key role to play in the future, too. We also want the Galileo Green Lane App for real time visualisation of congestion at European border-crossing points to be continued beyond the end of the pilot phase with the involvement of further Member States.

With respect to pandemics and other crises, various Member States also underlined the need to consider a flexibilisation of existing EU rules, for example in road transport.

We furthermore agreed that a pandemic and crisis contingency plan for freight transport can only be a first, albeit very important step. A corresponding plan for passenger transport should follow rapidly.

Let me also highlight a point that many of you have particularly emphasized: We must put to good use the lessons learned in the spring of this year and, in view of the fact that COVID-19 infections are on the rise again, continue to ensure the free movement of goods within the single market.

Finally, some Member States pointed out that innovations which will make transport more climate-friendly and more digital are of special importance for the economic recovery from the crisis.

The Council Presidency will now push for a rapid formal adoption of the Council conclusions on the basis of the prior discussions. We will summarize the aspects discussed and arguments presented within the framework of the ministerial conference, together with the Council conclusions, in a letter addressed by the Presidency to the European Commission.

Commissioner Vălean also provided us with information on the **developments concerning the future management of European air transport**. The future management of air transport must increase the





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efficiency of the entire air transport network. The aim must be to reduce costs and – as demonstrated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic – to enable the system to respond to fluctuating demand by providing it with the necessary flexibility and scalability. Unnecessary CO<sub>2</sub> emissions must be avoided by more efficient routing. The Air-space Architecture Study and the report of the Wise Persons Group contain recommendations on how these objectives can be achieved. The coordinated introduction of digital technologies represents a key element in this approach.

These objectives have the broad-based support of the EU Member States, although the ideas on how to achieve them vary greatly.

As you know, the European Commission already presented two legislative proposals on this issue in September 2020. There is no revised legislative impact assessment, but the accompanying Staff Working Document contains detailed explanations. As we are beyond the half-way point of the German EU Council Presidency, there is unfortunately not much time left for the formal consultations now starting on these Commission proposals. Rest assured, however, that the issue will continue to enjoy high priority for us, both under our EU Council Presidency and beyond.

Together with you, I would like to use the remaining months of the German EU Council Presidency to progress **further legislative dossiers and issues**, such as the revision of the Eurovignette Directive. I am counting on your support in this. We intend to host the Transport Council in Brussels on 8 December as a face-to-face event if possible, depending on the epidemiological situation.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the statements on the ministerial conference of 8 October 2020 that were sent in writing to the Presidency. As agreed, we are circulating them among the participants and attach them to this mail.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Andreas Scheuer