

PRESS RELEASE

ELP event on Combined Transport: business needs to make intermodal freight transport grow

Brussels, 8 November – At the fourth event organised by the European Logistics Platform (ELP) this year, over 40 EU policymakers and industry stakeholders convened in the European Parliament at a meeting hosted by MEP Markus Ferber, to listen to testimonies and experiences from Combined Transport CEOs operating in the EU. The debate took place after the adoption by the European Commission of the new proposal to amend the Combined Transport Directive.

Markus Ferber, EPP Coordinator in the ECON Committee and Substitute Member in the TRAN Committee of the European Parliament, opened the event by welcoming the Commission's proposal which completes the Greening Freight Package issued in July 2023. As an advocate for rail freight and for shifting freight from road to rail as the norm, Mr Ferber expressed the hope that the amendment will this time be successful. Whereas a framework for supporting Combined Transport is highly welcome, he also referred to the need for more investments into railway infrastructure, and particularly into terminals and overall capacity. In this respect he referred to the importance of implementing the 4th Railway Package, aimed at eliminating remaining barriers to the establishment of a single European rail area. Mr Ferber acknowledged that in view of the European elections Council and the European Parliament will not be able to come to an agreement, but he expressed the commitment of the European Parliament to make as much progress as possible before the end of its term.

Jürgen Albersmann, CEO, Contargo Group, emphasised the role of Combined Transport in contributing to a reduction of CO₂ emissions in freight transport. As a pioneer in combined transport, Contargo employs both rail and waterborne modes, which helps reducing freight emissions in a complementary way, while boosting energy efficiency and enabling modal optimisation in freight transport. In this respect, he noted 'zero-emission trucks (ZETs) are the perfect road technology to perform the road leg part of combined transport operations without climate emissions and are an enabler of zero-carbon door-to-door combined transport.' He highlighted that in view of the costs of Combined Transport support measures remained highly important. He referred to financial support measures from Germany over the last 20 years, which have resulted in €800 million invested in Combined Transport terminal which contributed to realising 2 million tonnes of CO₂ savings per year compared to road only transport. This translates to 1 million tonnes of CO₂ savings per €400 of public subsidy. Mr Albersmann advocated for continuous support efforts in view of the expected increase in freight transport, which without support will likely be absorbed by the road sector, rather than by rail freight or inland waterways.

Dariusz Stefanski, CEO, PCC Intermodal S.A., a large Polish Combined Transport operator and terminal manager, gave an overview of the experiences of his company in seeking to increase the shift to rail freight. He referred to the European Commission's 2011 White Paper entitled "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - towards a competitive and resource-efficient transport system," which outlined 40 initiatives to create a competitive transport system. While these initiatives were positive from a policy perspective, their implementation in the past decade has been less successful. Modal shift to rail freight and inland waterways has not happened and the share of road freight transport is increasing. 'Despite substantial investments, railway infrastructure and the capacity made available to freight trains is far away from needs and expectations. Bureaucracy and highly overregulated market

destroy competition' he noted. With this in mind, genuine initiatives will be needed as another decade should not be wasted.

Annika Kroon, Head of Unit, DG MOVE, European Commission, presented the Commission's proposal to amend the Combined Transport Directive, emphasising that the shift towards Combined Transport aims at reducing CO2 emissions, alleviating road congestion, and optimising capacity use. Ms Kroon noted that the proposal revamps the definition of combined transport operation eligible for support schemes as operations which save 40% of external costs compared to road-only alternatives. The methodology for calculating external cost savings will be addressed in an implementing act, based on values indicated in the Handbook of External Costs in Transport, while the GHG component will in the future be aligned with the CountEmissionsEU proposal once it receives final approval from co-legislators. The Commission, in its proposal also mandates Member States to draw up national policy frameworks to assess measures that impact competitiveness of combined transport operations in their territory and aim for a 10% cost reduction of such operations within 7,5 years. Ms Kroon highlighted the role of eFTI platforms, where operators will have to submit the relevant data to prove their eligibility to support regime, in promoting freight transport's digitalisation via the eFTI architecture. Finally, Ms Kroon noted that due to the European elections, a deal on the proposal is unlikely to be achieved before 2025.

ELP Chairwoman, Nicolette van der Jagt, Director General of CLECAT, closed the event, thanking all speakers and participants for their participation and announcing that the ELP would soon be back with new events.

The European Logistics Platform consists of more than twenty industry stakeholders representing a wide variety of actors involved in logistics and supply chains across Europe. Current members are ACEA, BDL, CER, CLECAT, Deutsche Bahn, DHL Group, duisport, ECG, ERFA, ESC, ESPO, FEPORT, FERRMED, Hutchison Whampoa, IRU, Logistics UK, Michelin, NLA, Port of Rotterdam, TLN, UIRR, Volvo Group.

www.european-logistics-platform.eu