

Newsletter

June – July 2020

I.	The German Presidency of the EU Council	1
	Mobility and Transport.....	1
II.	TRAN: Financial Framework and Next Generation EU	2
III.	TRAN: Climate Change Law	2
IV.	Regulations for automated driving.....	3
V.	Traffic safety in the COVID transition period	3
VI.	Calendar	5



The German Presidency of the EU Council

In the middle of one of the most serious economic crises in the European Community, the EU Council Presidency changes. After Croatia, Germany is now taking over the Presidency for the next six months.

In a video conference of the College of Commissioners at the beginning of the German EU Presidency, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, stressed that the start of the German Presidency came at a crucial time, as the next six months would largely determine the future of the EU. "We not only have to overcome the crisis, but we also want and must courageously continue along the path of modernisation within the European Union", she said at the press conference following the meeting. "The main challenges facing Europe before the crisis will remain the same after the crisis is over: climate change, digitalisation and Europe's place in the world." Recalling the urgency of the task of reaching agreement in the European Council on Next Generation EU and the EU's long-term budget, she said it is the crisis that "sets the pace [...]. Every day we lose, we see people losing their jobs, businesses going bust and our economies weakening".

Next Generation EU is a €750 billion funding programme aimed at getting Europe back on its feet. It is the first time in the EU's history that the Commission plans to borrow money on the financial markets. The plan calls for €500 billion to be spent in the form of grants, which means Member States will not have to pay it back, unlike the remaining €250 billion, which will be given in the form of loans.

Von der Leyen also noted at the press conference that the priorities of the German Presidency and the priority projects adopted by the Commission are fully in line - from climate change to digitisation and resilience.

Looking at the German national economic stimulus package, a clear green focus can be seen. It does not provide for premiums for diesel and petrol vehicles, it invests in batteries, e-charging,

railways and energy-efficient buildings. Such a green focus can also be found in the programme of the German EU Council Presidency:

"In the EU, crises have always been an opportunity to question the status quo and to prepare even better for the future. Our joint task goes far beyond the immediate management of the current situation. To do so, we must focus our attention on the major transformation processes of our time, such as climate change, digitalisation or the transformation of the world of work. In a world of increasing polarisation, European policy must also strengthen Europe's ability to act externally in order to defend European interests and assume our responsibility in the world. We advocate a rule- and human rights-based international order and want Europe to help shape standards and norms worldwide".

Mobility and Transport

The centrality of mobility and the transformation of transport in Europe are also highlighted in the German programme. The restoration of European fundamental freedoms is particularly important. For example, Germany intends to work towards the gradual lifting of Corona-related restrictions in the Schengen area, taking into account the epidemiological situation. The crisis-related restrictions on cross-border traffic and on the internal market are also to be lifted gradually in a coordinated manner in order to create the conditions for economic recovery.

According to the German programme, the mobility of the future must be sustainable, innovative and connected. As the Commission also emphasised in its Green Deal, a balance must be achieved between solving ecological challenges and ensuring the competitiveness of the European transport sector. Similarly, orientation for the EU strategy for sustainable and intelligent mobility announced by the Commission should be worked out and negotiations on legislative projects in individual transport sectors should be advanced.

Data sharing, including in the transport sector, is also listed as a priority. It is emphasised that the

protection of personal data, data sovereignty and consumer protection law must be guaranteed at all times. For the sovereignty of citizens, they must be able to store data on their terminal equipment securely and free from third-party access. To this end, the legal prerequisites should be created so that secure storage options, so-called standardised secure elements, are available in all terminal devices.

Although there is no mention of electromobility or alternative fuels, knowledge, research and education are seen as key drivers of European innovation and competitiveness and as the key to successful implementation of the European Green Deal. The further development of the European Research Area should also be used to promote green hydrogen.

Further Links:

- [Programme of the German Presidency of the EU Council](#)
- [Press Release of the Commission](#)

TRAN: Financial Framework and Next Generation EU

In June, the Parliamentary Transport Committee discussed both the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) in conjunction with the EU economic recovery plan and the climate change legislation.

In a meeting of the Committee with Henrik Hololei, Director General for Mobility and Transport at the European Commission, the financing perspectives in the transport sector in view of the new EU Recovery Plan and the revised proposal for the MFF 2021-2027 were discussed. Mr. Hololei stressed the crucial role of the transport sector for the European economic recovery. In his view, sustainability and digitalisation offer many opportunities to promote a rapid recovery and make the sector more resilient. Commission policy initiatives to complement EU financial support in the short and longer term include the forthcoming strategy for sustainable and intelligent mobility, the revision of the infrastructure directive for

alternative fuels and the TEN-T guidelines in 2021 as well as initiatives on sustainable alternative fuels for air and water transport, a common European mobility data space and the promotion of automated mobility through public-private partnerships. As regards financial support in the next MFF, in its revised proposal for the next MFF, the Commission has increased the budget for the general transport framework of the "Connecting Europe Facility" (CEF - an EU fund for pan-European infrastructure investment in transport, energy and digital projects) by €1,5 billion. A reinforced InvestEU programme will provide additional support for projects in the fields of clean transport, critical infrastructure and key transport technologies. In addition, substantial financial support for recovery is foreseen under the newly proposed Recovery and Resilience Facility of the EU's Next Generation EU Fund, where investments in the transition to a cleaner and more digital transport system can be prioritised by Member States in their national plans. Participants in the debate warned that the overall level of funding remains too low compared to the actual need for transport infrastructure investment and regretted the fact that the Commission has proposed to cut funding for military mobility, energy and digital infrastructure in the CEF. The speakers also stressed the importance of supporting the transition to sustainable and intelligent mobility, in particular through infrastructure and alternative fuel technologies. The debate underlined the current challenges in the transport sector, for recovery from the current crisis and beyond, in order to strengthen competitiveness and promote decarbonisation and digitisation.

Further Links:

- [Overview of the debate](#)

TRAN: Climate Change Law

In a separate meeting, rapporteur Tilly Metz (Greens) also presented her draft opinion and the numerous amendments to the proposed European climate law to the Transport

Committee, which was subsequently debated in detail. The Climate Change Bill is the core of the Green Deal and is both the framework and the way to achieve EU climate neutrality by 2050. Many MEPs took part in the ensuing debate, which showed the wide range of opinions on this issue in committee, including the need for ambition to decarbonise the transport sector, the need for realistic targets and consideration of long-term investments, the necessary degree of flexibility for individual Member States and the desire for sector-specific targets and measures.

Further Links:

- [Current draft opinion](#)
- [Overview climate change law](#)

Regulations for automated driving

Within the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), 53 countries, including the EU Member States, have agreed on common rules for so-called "Level 3" vehicle automation, i.e. vehicles that can perform some driving functions, including a mandatory black box.

At levels 3 to 5, the vehicle is fully automated, which means that the driver does not drive when the automated systems are switched on, but can jump in at any time and must take over when the system requests it. For comparison, Tesla's autopilot is at level 2, where the driver is expected to focus his attention on the traffic. At level 4, a driver does not need to be prepared to intervene quickly, at least in limited areas, while at level 5 the vehicles are fully autonomous.

Japan, which played a leading role in the drafting of the regulation together with Germany, will apply the mandatory rules when they come into force in January 2021. The European Commission, which was also involved in the project alongside France, Canada and especially the Netherlands, said the rules would apply in the EU at an indefinite later date, according to the UNECE.

The rules lay down strict requirements for Automated Lane Keeping Systems (ALKS), which can steer the vehicle when the driver is behind the steering wheel with the seat belt on. The rules ensure that ALKS can only be activated on roads equipped with a physical separation that separates traffic in opposite directions, where pedestrians and cyclists are prohibited. They also set a speed limit of 60 kilometres (37 miles) per hour. They also require that vehicles must be equipped with a data storage system for automated driving, known as the "black box", which records as soon as the ALKS is activated. Screens for activities other than driving are automatically switched off as soon as the driver takes control again. Car manufacturers must also introduce driver availability detection systems that monitor the driver's ability to regain control of the vehicle, including by blinking and closing his eyes. ALKS will also have to meet the cybersecurity and software updating requirements laid down in two other new UN regulations, that were also adopted shortly afterwards.

Further Links:

- [Press release UNECE](#)

Traffic safety in the COVID transition period

The Corona crisis had an unprecedented impact on transport and the mobility of European citizens, bringing travel to a virtual standstill for several weeks. During the crisis, our travel and mobility behaviour has changed dramatically and "individual mobility is now more than ever indispensable", as EAC President Bernd Opolka emphasised at the end of April. "For the mobility that is absolutely necessary, such as for the way to work, to go shopping or to visit the doctor, there is often no alternative for the own car that is both suitable and useful. One is travelling alone and the relatively manageable risk of infection, such as when charging or filling up with petrol, can be reduced to a minimum by adhering to the familiar hygiene regulations". "The crisis has

given us a new perspective on our mobility", says EAC Vice President Holger Küster. "Suddenly we are getting unmistakable proof of the importance of a wide range of means of transport. When buses and trains can no longer be used without restriction, those who still own their own car can count themselves lucky. It is now becoming clear that one-sided blanket demands for the displacement of the automobile are the wrong way to go.

The EU's High Level Group on Road Safety also noted a change in mobility: "There are now clear - and welcome - signs that economic activity is picking up again and that mobility on the roads is increasing accordingly. There is also evidence that more people are using individual forms of mobility such as the car - but there is also more walking and cycling - and less use of public transport".

But mobility in Europe will continue to change in the coming weeks and months as Europe gradually moves out of crisis mode into a transitional period, a period of gradual normalisation. Road safety is an essential area in this process, which was justifiably postponed during the height of the crisis, and rightly so.

The EU High Level Group on Road Safety therefore held a discussion on 16 June on road safety in the COVID era and agreed on informal conclusions setting out common principles for the forthcoming transitional period:

- obtain timely data on traffic volumes, accident victims, etc;
- limit exemptions from road safety rules;
- resuming proper enforcement;
- restoring public confidence in public transport;
- consolidate safe active mobility;
- Ensure investment in road safety;
- Flexible governance;
- communication.

Further Links:

- [Press release of the Commission](#)
- [EAC-Press release](#)

Calendar

Meeting Dates

Council

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council 28/09/2020

Competitiveness Council 24/09/2020

Council of Justice and Home Affairs 08/10/2020

Council of Environment 23/10/2020

Plenary 08-10/07/2020 (Agenda)

Committees

Environment (ENVI) 13/07/2020 (Agenda, tba)

Internal Market / Consumer (IMCO) 06-07/07/2020 (Agenda)

Justice & Home Affairs (LIBE) 06/07/2020 (Agenda)

Transport (TRAN) 13-14/07/2020 (Agenda)

Events (Brussels)

14/09/2020 AutoSensMatch

23/09/2020 High Level Conference - Skills and transformation of the EU's automotive sector