

# EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

## STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE EFTA STATES

Ref. 20-4318

2 December 2020

### SUBCOMMITTEES I-IV

#### **EEA EFTA Comment on the European Strategy for a Sustainable and Smart Mobility**

#### **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- *The EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) welcome the new Mobility Strategy.*
- *The EEA EFTA States share the EU's ambitions in speeding up the green transition of the transport sector following the COVID-19 pandemic, based on new innovative solutions and fast implementation while ensuring a level playing field.*
- *The EEA EFTA States support that Europe should take the global lead to reduce climate gas emissions from transport and the ambitious emission reductions target outlined in the new communication "Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition".*
- *The EEA EFTA States support a continued joint effort to develop and implement new technological solutions to achieve the shared vision of a sustainable, digital and more resilient transport sector.*
- *The EEA EFTA States acknowledge the important work in this area to increase safety and security in all modes of transport. A "Vision Zero" for all transport modes should be pursued.*
- *The EEA EFTA States support the promotion of sustainable transport with high safety standards and with a social dimension. We welcome the new social rules in the Mobility Package and believe that efforts now should be focused on enforcement, increased cooperation and exchange of information.*
- *The EEA EFTA States acknowledge the work of the European Commission and the EU to ensure the continuity of transport during the COVID-19 crisis, and recognise that increased joint cooperation and information sharing will be necessary for the recovery of the transport sector in the EEA. The EEA EFTA States support the establishment of a European pandemic contingency plan for the freight transport sector.*

## **2. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT**

### **The European Green deal and sustainable transport**

1. In the framework of the European Green Deal, the EEA EFTA States recognise that in order to meet our commitments under the Paris Agreement, there is an urgent need to increase decarbonisation in all transport modes, continuing the joint European efforts to develop a more sustainable transport industry.
2. The revision of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive should take into account that market barriers to the deployment of alternative fuels in the transport sector to a large degree depend on technological developments in the various transport modes. A flexible EU-wide approach to the development of infrastructure should be adopted. The Directive should provide standards for alternative fuels, including for the charging of electric vehicles.
3. Strategies and legislation in the transport field should be technology-neutral, as it is not possible to predict which technologies will be competitive in the future. The potential of national funding schemes and requirements in public contracts to stimulating the introduction of low and zero-emission technology should be addressed.
4. European emission requirements for cars, vans and heavy vehicles are very important tools to reach the overall goals of reducing emissions from the road transport sector. The EEA EFTA States support the emission requirements that are set, and a proposal for a new Euro 7 emission standard for cars, vans, lorries and buses.
5. The development of zero or low-emission aviation is promising and the potential of the electrification of aviation should be highlighted. On short-haul flights, new zero-emission aircrafts could transform aviation. The benefits would include reduced operating cost, more flexibility in terms of runway length, and considerably less noise and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### **Innovation**

6. Horizon Europe is an important tool for research and innovation. Research and development in the maritime industry are important factors in the digitalisation, automation and development of green shipping, including projects on alternative fuel/zero emission and autonomous shipping. The development of the rail system is key to achieving sustainable, digital and resilient rail transport, and the new partnerships under Horizon Europe will be crucial to reach the European common goals for the rail sector.

### **Rail transport**

7. The political statement on International Rail Passenger Transport highlights important issues that are of particular interest for the EEA EFTA States, such as better digital solutions for travel information and purchase of international tickets, increased numbers

of international night train connections and the removal of bottlenecks in rail corridors to improve capacity, reduce travel time and increase punctuality.

## **Aviation**

8. The EEA EFTA States welcome the Commission's ReFuelAviation initiative concerning the supply and demand for sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) in the EU. An increased demand for SAF through the introduction of quota obligations would contribute to the development of a well-functioning market for SAF by incentivising investments in production and distribution. However, the financial impact of quota obligations must be carefully considered.

## **Maritime transport**

9. The declaration from the Informal Ministerial Meeting of 11 March 2020 reflects the importance of maintaining a competitive European maritime transport industry for employment and sustainable value creation and addresses the challenges related to the reduction of carbon emissions and other potentially harmful pollutants and their release into oceanic waters, the enhancement of safety at sea, the development of competencies and the promotion of digitalisation. It is important to further develop a safe and sustainable quality shipping industry, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, based on global rules through the work in IMO and ILO. Requirements and incentives for supply and use of onshore power and alternative fuels will contribute to improve local air quality and noise reduction by cutting emissions.
10. Predictable conditions for competition, including upholding state aid guidelines for maritime transport, are a crucial element for maintaining a global level playing field in the maritime transport industry. Protectionist tendencies in maritime transport should be continuously addressed. Short sea shipping, reduction of administrative burdens, development of relevant instruments and incentives for financing of green fleet renewal should be supported and promoted.

## **3. SAFETY & SECURITY**

### **Vision Zero for all transport modes**

11. A “Vision Zero” for the whole transport sector would contribute to enhanced levels of safety and security in all transport modes. The EEA EFTA States recognise the important work of the EU in this context.
12. The EEA EFTA States support the EU Road Safety Policy Framework and the EU Strategic Action Plan on Road Safety, including a target to reduce the number of serious injuries, believing that one of the keys to road safety development is adopting a long-term, targeted and knowledge-based approach ensuring involvement of all major stakeholders.
13. Road sections, tunnels and bridges should be as safe as possible. Advances in technology will help solve some of the challenges. The adoption of effective measures

and the extension of the coverage of the existing road safety measures will be key to tackle the stagnation in progress on reducing road deaths in the EU. The European firm and holistic cross-sectoral approach to road safety based on the Safe System Approach towards infrastructure, vehicles and road users should be maintained.

#### **4. SMARTER TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS**

##### **Digitalisation and innovation**

14. The EEA EFTA States welcome the policies outlined in the EU's Digital Strategy, including the Communications on artificial intelligence and a European strategy for data, and the initiatives launched to establish a common European mobility data space.
15. The EU can benefit from innovations brought by data and digital progress across all transport modes. Ensuring coherent regulatory frameworks, supporting research and innovation, setting interoperability standards and facilitating access to data within and across modes are key elements. The EEA EFTA States will contribute to the future activities regarding transport, ensuring a European data economy that covers the whole transport market in the EEA.
16. Data-driven innovative solutions in the mobility sector are crucial to develop smarter, safer and greener transport. The development of advanced traffic management systems across all transport modes is key in this respect. The COVID-19 pandemic is yet another reason to keep up momentum in developing data-driven smarter systems to impact mobility behaviour, especially in public transportation.

#### **5. USER FRIENDLY MOBILITY AND QUALITY TRANSPORT FOR ALL**

##### **Urban transport**

17. The EEA EFTA States emphasise the challenges faced by many urban areas caused by increased road traffic, such as congestion, noise, and air pollution, and encourages the European Commission to tackle the growth of private car travels in urban areas. Walking, cycling and the use of public transport should be promoted as alternatives and as far as possible absorb the growth in urban transport. Decisions concerning the means to achieve this objective should be left to Member States, accounting for national, regional and local variations. A European transport policy must be fair to all, regardless of gender, including to citizens who live outside urban areas and for whom the car is the sole means of transportation.

##### **Aviation passenger rights**

18. The EEA EFTA States support the work to finalise the revision of Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 on air passengers' rights. Clarification of legal grey areas and codification of case law from the Court of Justice of the European Union are necessary for the industry. Unavoidable events, like the COVID-19 pandemic or volcanic ash close-downs, shed

light on the distribution of risk between passengers and airlines, and should be regulated in a more precise and proportionate way.

### **Regulation and enforcement of labour rights in aviation**

19. The EEA EFTA States support the Commission's effort to raise awareness of the correct understanding of the Rome I Regulation and the need for effective enforcement of these rules, addressing the issue of self-employment of air crew and ensuring distribution of rights and obligations in compliance with the relevant legislation. If needed, EU legislative initiatives should be considered to ensure real distribution of rights and obligations between the individual crew and the airline, for instance, formalising the link between the concepts of "home base", "operational base" and labour rights.

### **Level playing field in the road transport sector**

20. The EEA EFTA States welcome the adoption of new social rules in the first Mobility Package, creating a level playing field, better social rights for drivers and better enforcement. The development of the smart tachograph and other common tools to assist control authorities will be crucial to achieve these objectives. It is important to strengthen the enforcement in the road transport sector through increased cooperation and exchange of information, continuing the promotion of road safety, fair competition and social rights at a European level. This includes development of common rules to promote safe driving in demanding conditions and efficient cross-border enforcement. The regulations in road transport should reduce the opportunities for abuse and fraud related to social rights and road safety.