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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Informal meeting of the Environment and Transport Ministers
(Amsterdam, 14-15 April 2016)
- Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Presidency on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 20 June 2016.

Informal meeting of the Environment and Transport Ministers

(Amsterdam, 14-15 April 2016)

- Information from the Presidency -

Ministers of Transport and the Environment met in Amsterdam for an informal meeting on "Innovating for the future: smart and green solutions for sustainable transport".

The meeting was also attended by European Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete and representatives of the European Parliament.

Green Mobility – Transition towards low and zero-emission mobility

The transition towards low- and zero-emission mobility is an essential requirement to attain the Paris climate goals. It also offers opportunities for green growth and improving air quality in Europe.

Environment Ministers expressed broad support for this transition and fully recognised the opportunities it creates. Consistent and ambitious policies are needed at both national and European level, also to establish a positive investment climate for the private sector. In its Presidency Conclusions on Green Mobility, the Presidency concluded that a comprehensive European approach is required, which seeks tailor-made solutions for each mode of transport. Tighter CO2 standards for cars, new CO2 standards for trucks, the use of advanced biofuels during the transition period and investments in the infrastructure for alternative fuels should all be part of such a comprehensive approach.

Together with a number of Member States, the European Commission emphasised that increasing the efficiency and sustainability of current transport and mobility systems will not suffice to achieve the targets for CO2 reduction and air quality. In this context, it is essential to facilitate technological innovation. European funds, including the Horizon2020 programme and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), could play an important role in this regard

Smart Mobility -Cooperation in the field of Connected and Automated Driving

The Declaration of Amsterdam on connected and automated driving, was prepared in cooperation with the European Commission, Member States and industry. The Declaration identifies key actions to support the introduction of connected and automated driving and to achieve its full potential. It includes important topics like the enabling legislative framework, use of data, liability issues, exchange of knowledge and cross-border testing to ensure interoperability. The objective is to work towards a coherent European framework for the deployment of interoperable connected and automated driving, which should be available, if possible by 2019.

Transport Ministers endorsed the Declaration and expressed their support for the shared objectives, joint agenda and actions, based on a common approach of ‘learning by experience’. The European Truck Platoon challenge is a good example of such an approach.

Another important feature of the ‘learning by experience’ approach is the use of ITS-corridors to gain experience and exchange knowledge in order to take further steps in putting the Declaration into practice. Examples are the Nordic Way, the NL-DE-AT C-ITS corridor, and future C-ITS pilots within the framework of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).

The European Commission stated their intention to work on an integrated strategy, based on existing initiatives by a number of policy departments and services of the Commission. An important subject in this strategy will be the interaction between (automated) vehicles and infrastructure and the conditions for use of data for public and private services.

As a follow-up to the Declaration, the Netherlands will take the initiative to organise the first meeting of the informal high-level structural dialogue. The provisional date set for this meeting is Wednesday 2 November 2016.

Future scenarios for smart and sustainable mobility

In an innovative and interactive setting, Ministers of transport and the environment jointly explored future scenarios for mobility. With this session, the Presidency aimed to bring together the concepts of “smart mobility” and “green mobility”.

Ministers identified a need for further work on harmonisation and standardisation in the field of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to build the transport system of the future. Facilitating innovation and developing the infrastructure required were generally regarded as the main challenges.

The European Commission and Member States recognised the need for a comprehensive approach towards smart and sustainable mobility that involves both transport and environment Ministers, in close cooperation with colleagues responsible for other policy areas that impact upon the transport sector. They also emphasised that the transport system of the future must by definition be multimodal in nature. The Presidency called upon Member States to learn by experience and to share best practices.

Follow-up to COP21: emissions from international shipping and aviation

In a joint session, Ministers of Transport and the Environment discussed global CO₂ emissions from shipping and aviation in the context of the international climate agreement that was reached at COP21 in Paris.

Aviation and shipping each account for about 2% of all CO₂ emissions. Due to the expected growth in these sectors, emissions may rise considerably without additional measures.

It was concluded that the follow-up to the Paris Agreement requires a global approach to tackle emissions from shipping and aviation within ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) and IMO (International Maritime Organisation). Ministers emphasised the importance of the scope and effectiveness of measures, a level playing field and safeguarding European competitiveness.

Member States supported an ambitious European effort within both ICAO and IMO. They noted that, in order to reach effective global solutions, Europe should cooperate with non-EU countries, especially those that show support for a global scheme such as a GMBM, but still have some reservations. EU climate diplomacy actions should help to reach this goal. Europe should speak as one on this issue.

The Presidency concluded that efforts to restrict emissions from shipping and aviation should be geared, in particular, towards a successful outcome of the negotiations within ICAO and IMO. In the framework of ICAO, it is important to create a robust global market mechanism for CO2 emissions in aviation. In IMO, the ambition in the short term has been to reach agreement on a world-wide obligatory data collection system for CO2 emissions in shipping. This will allow us to determine the contribution of maritime shipping to the reduction of CO2 emissions at global level and should help to rekindle the debate in IMO on market-based measures in the maritime sector.

Transport security

Prompted by the terrorist attacks in Brussels on 22 March 2016, transport security was added as a topic for discussion. Ministers of transport shared their concerns and exchanged experiences. The European Commission indicated that transport security is a priority, and emphasised the importance of sharing information and best practices, also with non-EU countries.

Border controls

Ministers discussed bottlenecks for the transport sector resulting from the introduction of border controls within the Schengen area. Ministers underlined the importance of open borders in the Schengen area to ensure efficient transport operations in the internal market. This was also the key message of stakeholders from the transport sector in their written contributions to the debate.

The European Commission indicated that border controls are an obstacle for the free movement of goods and persons within the Schengen area. The Commission emphasised that it aims for a swift return to the normal border control-free situation. Border controls within the Schengen area should be restricted in time and their frequency should be proportionate to what is strictly necessary. Any delays should be as limited as possible.

Various Member States indicated the main bottlenecks for their country, not only at the internal borders, but also on the EU external borders, covering both land and sea.