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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Council

Subject: **Any other business**

Work programme of the incoming Presidency

– Information from the Bulgarian delegation

Delegations will find attached an information note prepared by the Bulgarian delegation on the above-mentioned subject for consideration under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) on 5 December 2017.

During its Presidency, Bulgaria will strive in a positive spirit towards achieving future-oriented realistic results, following the principles of transparency, accountability and 'openness to citizens'. We will try to maintain the active dialogue on the top European issues and to respond to expectations for greater security, employment, sustainable growth and stronger EU presence on the world stage. Following those goals, the Bulgarian Presidency will promote consensus, competitiveness and cohesion in all policy sectors.

The sector of transport has always been regarded as a powerful tool for boosting the economy and welfare of all European regions. It facilitates the regional cohesion and blends the ethnic, political, economic and social differences among Member States, thus bringing an important added value to the European Union. Considering all those benefits, Bulgaria will try to solve some of the most topical EU transport issues during its six-months' chairmanship of the Council.

The Bulgarian Presidency will predominantly work on the road initiatives included in the Mobility Package I and the legislative acts presented in the Aviation Strategy for Europe.

In land transport, the Bulgarian Presidency will continue the work in the Council on the legislative proposals of the Mobility package I. Our main effort will be to promote a competitive, socially and economically viable road transport sector that grows sustainably within the European Single Market. We believe that Mobility package I should be based on fair and balanced solutions that take into account the need of adequate protection of drivers, alongside the exercise of fundamental freedom of providing services and smooth functioning of the European Internal Market. We will strive to achieve clear, transparent and balanced sectorial legislation. The Presidency will focus on debates on access to the market and occupation, rest periods, tachographs, *lex specialis* on posting of drivers, electronic toll systems and hired vehicles, while at the same time aiming at further significant progress on other market pillar files such as charging.

Against the negotiations with the European Parliament achieved during the Estonian Presidency, it is possible that the Bulgarian Presidency will hold a final trilogue on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers.

In the field of railway transport, the aim will be to make substantial progress on establishing fair and proportionate legal principles and building a system of adequately protected rail passengers' rights in order to ensure legal certainty.

The financing of rail transport will be discussed by EU stakeholders during a discussion forum – "Financing rail transport in the Multiannual Financial Framework post 2020" which will take place on 31 January 2018 in Brussels. A high-level expert meeting on "EU support for development of rail transport in Bulgaria and Western Balkans: current opportunities and future perspectives" will be held in April 2018 in Sofia.

With regard to intermodal questions and networks, the Bulgarian Presidency will open the Mobility Package II and start working at expert level on the revision of the Directive on the establishment of common rules for combined transport. Our basic goal is to present a progress report at the TTE Council in June 2018. Nevertheless, the Presidency will try to push the discussions further with view to achieve an eventual general approach by that time. We believe that, in addition to providing economic and environmental benefits, the revised Directive could become a powerful tool for developing multimodality links between the existing transport infrastructures of the EU. The Presidency will conclude the discussion on the draft Council Conclusions on the Single European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), which will be submitted for adoption by the Council of Ministers of Transport. The future solutions in intermodal transport will be further discussed in the framework of the high-level ministerial meeting "Multimodality Transport for Europe" on 19-20 March 2018 in Sofia.

In aviation, the Presidency will carry on the work on the proposal for Regulation on safeguarding competition in air transport with a view of reaching a general approach. As the subject of connectivity is important to the EU and to Bulgaria, the Presidency will invite Civil Aviation Authorities to attend a conference on the topic of "Air transport – bridge for integration of South-East European countries" on 28 February 2018 in Sofia. The Bulgarian Presidency will closely follow the mandates of the Commission and the outcomes of negotiations on comprehensive air transport agreements with third countries.

In the maritime transport field, if a proposal for revision of the Port Reception Facilities Directive is presented as planned by the end of 2017 the Bulgarian Presidency will start the work on it in the Working Party.

We will take over the tradition of the annual organization of "European Maritime Day" and will host the event on 31 May – 1 June 2018 in Burgas. Another event - a European Conference on Maritime Policy is to be held on 3-5 May 2018 in Varna.

The Bulgarian Presidency will organize only one TTE Council (Transport) on 7 June 2018 in Luxembourg. No informal Transport Councils have been envisaged.
