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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Working Party on Transport - Intermodal Questions and Networks
Subject:	Fit for 55 Package - AFIR: Proposal for a Regulation on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, and repealing Directive 2014/94/EU - comments from Bulgaria

Delegations will find in the annex, comments from Bulgaria on the subject mentioned above.

ALTERNATIVE FUELS INFRASTRUCTURE REGULATION (AFIR)

NATIONAL POSITION BY BULGARIA

Bulgaria welcomes the proposal and wishes the Presidency the best of luck in reaching a quick compromise. We consider the EU-wide deployment of an alternative fuels infrastructure network with a sufficient capacity to be an important prerequisite for achieving our climate ambitions and for the transition to a sustainable transport system, based on mass electromobility. Our intention is to follow a constructive approach on the file, while at the same time guarantee the necessary flexibility so Member States can address appropriately their specific geographic, demographic and socio-economic situations and protect their businesses from stranded assets. Therefore we support the two main underlying principles with regard to electric recharging infrastructure, namely the **fleet-based targets** and setting a criteria for **minimal distance** between the recharging pools on the TEN-T network, since we think they are fair and we recognize that they form the basis to accommodate the needs of a European transport system in the making. Nonetheless we support changes in favor of less stringent criteria on the following provisions:

Legal form (Art. 1)

We are not able to stand behind the decision to propose the revision in the form of a regulation; we'd prefer a directive in line with the IA since that would make it possible to accommodate much better the infrastructure needs and capabilities of the different MS in a sphere where national and regional differences in the projected uptake are very significant. The discussions in the WP especially on art. 3 and 4 have shown that a common one-size-fits-all approach cannot satisfyingly address those differences. If the proposal is to be discussed in the form a regulation, then we'd like to find a way for that need for flexibility and proportionality to be taken into account so we can limit the financial burden stemming from those substantial investments, the strain on the economic operators and investors as well as on the underlying electric infrastructure.

Electric LDV targets (Art. 3)

We support increasing the minimal distance between recharging pools on both Core and Comprehensive network to 100 km. Especially aligning the distance for LDV with the one for HDV (Art. 4) on the Comprehensive network is absolutely necessary for us in order to protect public and private funds being wasted on stranded assets on road sections with lower traffic density. Furthermore, we support for MS to be granted more time for the initial deployment in the first couple of years after the adoption in order to properly coordinate the whole technical process, starting from aligning it with the national policy frameworks that are supposed to become final only in the beginning of 2025, to permit granting procedures and land acquisition.

Electric HDV targets (Art. 4)

We support aligning the minimal distance between Core and Comprehensive TEN-T network to 100 km and a serious reduction of the power output criteria, as per the compromise proposal by the Presidency. Again, we support for MS to be granted more time for the initial deployment in the first couple of years after the adoption. In light of the upcoming revision of Regulation 1315/2013 we support extending the deadlines for the deployment of recharging infrastructure on urban nodes to 2030 and 2035 respectively.

Hydrogen targets for road transport (Art. 6)

Hydrogen is still at a very early stage of its development as a fuel alternative and available at significant cost and low energy efficiency. We are skeptical about the overall economic viability for setting mandatory targets for hydrogen, especially in the case of Bulgaria, where the projected uptake is expected to be negligible in the coming years, so we could support transforming the targets to non-mandatory recommendations. Other than that we insist on an increase of the envisaged time frame up to 2033 and the exclusion of the Comprehensive TEN-T network from the target.

Liquid hydrogen is even costlier, less energy efficient and still is surrounded by uncertainty with regard to the handling of its physical characteristics, such as permeation, boil-off effect during the cryogenic process and the extreme cost of the liquefaction itself. Therefore we support its complete deletion from the proposal, including the deletion of the last sentence in par. 3 with regard to freight terminals.

Electricity supply to stationary aircraft (Art. 12)

We support increasing the time frame for the airports on the Comprehensive TEN-T up to 2028 for gates and 2033 for outfield posts due to the financial challenges that the aviation sector is facing in light of its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We also support introducing exemptions for smaller airports from the provision to provide electricity at outfield posts.

Administrative burden (Art. 13-16)

As a general comment we understand the significant effort that goes with setting up and implementing the national policy frameworks as well as monitoring the progress, but at the same time we want to keep the administrative burden to the necessary minimum. Therefore we will closely follow the discussions on those provisions and support reasonable ideas to reducing obligations that seem to burdensome.