

BRUSSELS, 4 DECEMBER 2017

ROAD ALLIANCE MINISTERS' STATEMENT

ON THE EVE OF THE EU-TRANSPORT COUNCIL CALL FOR A MORE INTEGRATED, SOCIALLY FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE SINGLE EUROPEAN ROAD HAULAGE MARKET

Following several technical meetings this year and exchanges since the last Ministers' meeting in June, the members of the Road Alliance (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland and Norway) met in Brussels the day before the Council meeting. Their colleague from The Netherlands also supports this statement.

The Ministers underlined the importance of the agreement reached in EPSCO Council and noted that, current EU legislation will continue to apply to posted workers in the road transport sector, pending discussions on the mobility package. The outcome of the EPSCO Council is without any prejudice for the further work on the mobility package.

They had an exchange of views based on the progress report on the mobility package negotiations which will be presented by the Estonian Presidency during this Council meeting.

They took note of the second part of the mobility package, which will be presented in the Council by the Commission. Here they noted that the two proposals on combined transport and rules for access to the international market for coach and bus services are clearly linked to the first part of the mobility package.

They emphasized the principles that drive them in the conduct of the negotiations: (i) establishing a single road haulage market, where competition will be fair, (ii) laying down the conditions ensuring decent working conditions for drivers following the principle of « equal pay for equal work », (iii) taking into account safety of drivers and road users and (iv) strengthening the fight against fraud and illicit practices.

These core principles are coherent with the main objective of the Road Alliance which is to move towards an integrated Europe in which road haulage is based on both the single market and on the respect for fundamental rights, particularly social rights.

At this stage of the negotiations, the Ministers expressed their common view on the necessity to reinforce several components of the mobility package in order to get a right balance, which is not yet achieved. They welcomed some progress achieved by the Presidency regarding light commercial vehicles operating in international road transport and remain careful of future negotiations on this issue of the utmost importance for the economic and social equilibrium to an open and sustainable common market in road transport. In this context, particular attention has to be paid to the question of cabotage: as long as the principles above are not met, no further steps towards liberalisation of these operations - be it in legal or practical terms - can be accepted.

Ministers stressed that they would also present joint proposals, in particular on controls, which need to be strengthened and simplified. To do so, they will formulate concrete proposals in the coming weeks to speed up the digitalisation of these controls. They share the view that smart tachographs should be deployed for freight transport before the current 2034 deadline. They also welcome the recent development of electronic consignment notes among many of the Alliance member states and wish to promote their use on a wider European scale.

The Road Alliance remains committed to continue constructive discussions within the Council about these issues and to discuss prospects for cooperation with other Member States.