ROAD TRANSPORT’S FUTURE CHALLENGES

MANIFESTO REPORT
https://eurac.tv/9QJT

With the support of
Transport policy is set to be a crucial cog of the EU’s policy-making patchwork over the next five years. But how do trucks, coaches, buses and other road-based options fit into the scheme of things?

Environmental footprint may capture most headlines but road transport also has a number of other challenges to meet head-on, from addressing social concerns like safety and talent-retention to dragging the sector into the digital age.
Transport policy in for the long haul in next Commission
Commission should ‘pick right battles’, says road transport head
For a world in motion
EU policy- and law-makers have their work cut out for them once the incoming European Commission takes office. Incomplete legislative work and the need to address new challenges will keep transport officials occupied for some time.

On 10 September, Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen revealed that Romania’s Rovana Plumb is in line to handle transport for the next five years.

If she is confirmed by a European Parliament hearing, pencilled in for 2 October, many of the pieces will be in place for the game ahead, given that the EU assembly’s transport committee is now established as well.

Notable items left on the agenda include the mobility package, rules on digital freight information and tweaking how vehicle emissions are calculated.

In von der Leyen’s mission letter to her candidate Commissioner, the president-elect tasked Plumb with drafting “a comprehensive strategy for sustainable and smart mobility” and contributing to a “zero-pollution ambition”.

More specifically, the transport Commissioner will lead the work on extending the EU’s emissions trading scheme (ETS) to the maritime and aviation sectors. Currently only internal EU flights are covered by the carbon market and calls have been made in recent months for the Commission to draft an ‘aviation package’.

Von der Leyen also touches on the social side of transport in her instructions: “you should ensure that [transport] remains affordable, reliable and accessible, notably for those on low income or living in remote areas, and that passenger

Continued on Page 5
Continued from Page 4

rights are respected”.

Talks are still ongoing on a number of issues, including on rail passenger rights rules. Disabled access to train travel is currently problematic, as passengers have to inform rail companies 48 hours in advance. MEPs want to change the law so that the limit is three hours.

DRIVING POLICY

While the next Commission’s attention to passenger rights is clear from von der Leyen’s mission letter, less clear is what focus will be given to the professionals who work in the transport industry, like coach and truck drivers.

Road transport stakeholders have called on the EU institutions to ensure a number of requirements are uniformly adopted across the bloc. That includes a minimum age of 18 for truck drivers, rule tweaks to help people get into the profession and flexibility for coach tourism.

Given the number of trucks on Europe’s roads, a driver shortage may not seem immediately obvious but the International Road Transport Union (IRU) insists that it is the “most acute” shortage in decades.

Kristian Kaas Mortensen, a manager at haulage giant Girteka, recently said his firm is “acutely aware of the driver shortage”, adding that “staff turnover within the sector is high but today some companies are facing levels of turnover as high as around 50%”.

Factors like stress and difficulties getting into the job in the first place contribute to the problem but Mortensen was confident that pending changes to EU rules will make a difference.

“I think the EU’s Mobility Package could have a very positive impact. By improving standards around rest time rules, safety infrastructure and access to the profession, it has the potential to drive up the standards of working life for drivers across the continent,” he explained.

Negotiations on the package are still ongoing. Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc told EURACTIV she is confident a solution can be found, despite the misgivings still held by a small number of member states.

But the road transport industry wants to go further still. The new Commission is already being urged to make sure there are enough parking spaces for truck drivers along the EU’s road network.

According to industry estimates, €6-7 billion is lost in cargo thefts every year in the EU. More than €1 billion of that figure is lost in Germany alone.

The IRU says there should be a European strategy, standards and a Commission implementing act to roll out more safe sites so that drivers do not have to park in insecure areas or on hard shoulders.

IRU’s Brussels office head Matthias Maedge told EURACTIV that the safety issue is a particular problem for efforts aimed at getting young women into the profession. The proportion of the EU workforce is currently a paltry 2%.

GREEN ROADS

Transport is a crucial part of the EU’s decarbonisation drive. As the only part of the economy to still record rising emissions, the bloc’s policy-makers will have to address the issue head-on if climate targets are to be met.

An overall reduction goal for 2030, light-vehicle benchmarks, a first attempt at regulating truck emissions and a carbon-neutrality pledge will all play heavily on the mind of Commissioners and MEPs in this coming mandate.

Despite calls by initiatives like Shift2Rail and clean mobility associations, road freight transport is only expected to grow. Estimates talk of a 60% increase by 2050 if the current trend does indeed continue.

The European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA) advocates for more charging infrastructure, research into alternative fuels like hydrogen and tweaks to existing freight rules, in order to square the climate-demand circle.

That includes the use of modular trucks: high capacity vehicles that allow hauliers to deliver more goods per trip. ACEA calculates that CO₂ emission savings of up to 27% can be made using these larger trucks.

“In order to allow the benefits of high-capacity vehicles to be felt right across the entire EU, we urge policymakers to enable the introduction of a high-capacity transport system across borders,” former ACEA boss Erik Jonnaert said in a statement earlier this year.

Some countries like Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Sweden already allow high-capacity trucks under the European Modular System (EMS). But the scheme is not an EU-wide initiative.

As an example of the patchwork nature of rules on the issue, only some of Germany’s regions allow the modular system, meaning services are not possible across the whole of the Bundesrepublik.

There are also a number of other “low-hanging fruits”, according to Matthias Maedge, including cab design and more aerodynamic trailers.

In February, EU negotiators agreed on new rules for rounder cab designs, meant to reduce fuel consumption and eliminate blind-zones. The idea is to have them on the market by September 2020.

Safety was a clear tent-pole of the outgoing EU transport chief, Violeta Bulc, who confirmed on Monday (16 September) the Commission and member states’ pledge to halve road fatalities and serious injuries between 2020 and 2030.
Commission should ‘pick right battles’, says road transport head

By Sam Morgan | EURACTIV.com

Ursula von der Leyen’s new Commission should look seriously at making sure transport rules are well-tailored to different types of vehicles, while taking advantage of several “low-hanging fruits”, according to road transport association chief Matthias Maedge.

Matthias Maedge is General Delegate at the International Road Transport Union’s (IRU) Permanent Delegation to the EU in Brussels.

He sat down with EURACTIV’s Sam Morgan.

What is your view on the new European Commission, announced last week?

Looking at the appointment of the new Commission, we take note that environment and digitalisation are spearheading UVDL’s team. Executive vice-presidents will be supporting the future transport Commissioner, in the sense of greening and modernising transport.

Continued on Page 7
We certainly hope that the Commission’s choice of working on important subjects affecting our sector, with three different Commissioners will be efficient. We’re looking forward to close cooperation with them. For us, it’s fundamentally important that we drive the agenda together, delivering services for society.

We want to remind everyone that a modal shift policy is counterproductive to the Commission’s own pledge when it comes to road service demand. Freight is set for a 60% increase, passengers a 42% increase, by 2050. So how does a modal shift discussion fit into that? We want to see a transport policy that has modal or intermodal cooperation instead of prioritising certain modes.

We’re not convinced at the moment that the prioritisation of digitalisation is moving forward the way it should. But we’ve got strong hopes with the new Commission.

Was the previous Commission efficient?

It was a massive problem but the Commission admitted that. It said on various occasions that it was struggling to get out of its silos. The issues affecting our industry are linked to various Commission DGs after all, so we hope it’ll be different with the new executive.

Commissioner Violeta Bulc said last week before the von der Leyen announcement that she supports the transport portfolio remaining intact rather than being split between other policy areas. Are you glad it has panned out that way?

There was a discussion on potentially appointing a mobility Commissioner. We believe that would have made sense and it could have simplified matters and discussions. The issue and the business is challenged by so many changing things.

The last Commission, take the Mobility package as an example, simply mobilised certain things too late. That’s led to delays, lack of clarity, the next Commission will have to pick up stuff left over.

We’re here to suggest things the Commission simply has not thought about, like access to the market for taxis and ride-hailing services. You see a disruption in Europe there, with the taxi market being liberalised across the EU. That’s raising lots of questions, so harmonisation of rules is key.

The Commission at least is aware of that but we’d like to see a legislative proposal. There’s one already for bus and coach services and that should be adopted.

Let me put to you a specific scenario: I’m a 16-year-old interested in getting in to truck driving. What’s stopping me doing that at the moment?

At the moment, young people interested in that profession are prevented from getting in to it by the current rules. Countries apply different strategies and rules that prevent young talent from getting training. There are kilometre limitations, age difference, cross-border discrepancies and more.

It does not make sense that we have different rules, 18 should be set as the harmonised age when it is legal. EU law actually says that but it is not mandatory, countries interpret it as they wish.

What is driving your sector’s shortage of professionals?

We have to make the job more attractive, firstly. Take the issue of visa applications, needed for international transport. Leaving and entering the EU is a common occurrence because big corporations have factories outside the EU.

And there we have a problem: if you’re crossing from Turkey into Bulgaria, you can expect to wait two days for clearance. That puts prospective drivers off. Visa applications have to be online, as a start. EU policy can do a lot to attract talent to the profession.

Is that all that puts off prospective drivers or are factors like safety an issue?

Indeed, safety is a concern and when we talk about that we have to consider secure parking areas, because hotels are not a solution.

As well as the safety side, there’s also the question of infrastructure. Can drivers shower? Is there somewhere to eat? We want to attract women to the sector. Only 2% are female at the moment. Safety is a big part of that drive. It isn’t just long-distance routes either, there’s a lot of national services that require overnight parking.

How do you judge what is and what isn’t a safe parking area?

There is work to be done on standards. We concluded a European project on the issue but the Commission has not yet put in place a mandatory standard, through an implementing act.

Now it’s a case of discussing with other stakeholders and the new Commissioner how funds under things like the Connecting Europe Facility should be split up. 100,000 parking spaces are missing. If someone wants to build new ones that don’t adhere to the safety standard we want, should they get that funding?

A pragmatic approach is needed there, in upgrading existing parking facilities and building new ones.

Are drivers the only ones let down by the current rules or are companies not happy either?
Take passenger transport as an example. There’s a difference between truck and coach drivers. The Commission has completely overlooked the needs of coach and bus drivers when it comes to rest and drive-time rules, as there’s no flexibility at the moment. Truck rules are applied, which simply does not make sense. The European Parliament actually proposed a compromise on this as part of the mobility package but it was sacrificed as part of talks on truck rules.

Using a bit of our industry as a bargaining chip was an unacceptable solution. We’ve been promised by the Commission that in return for our support of the truck rules, they will amend the bus and coach rules accordingly.

**On environmental issues, what changes can the road transport sector make to cut emissions?**

One piece of low-hanging fruit is high-capacity vehicles. A number of countries already allow them, in Scandinavia and the Iberian peninsula, but there is no harmonised framework. Only part of Germany allow them, for example.

Emissions could be reduced by up to 30% by using them, as more goods can be moved by fewer vehicles. Better aerodynamics of trailers and cab design are another factor.

**What are the obstacles then?**

There's a lack of awareness and misconceptions about it. Certain stakeholders have torpedoed an idea that we think is the best innovation out there in terms of efficiency and the environment.

Terms like ‘monster trucks’ were very negatively annotated. We don’t understand the objections or lack of political willingness.

**But is European infrastructure ready for high-capacity vehicles?**

They are better for infrastructure because of the reduced axle weight! We’re confronted with bridges that are no longer able to carry the transport volume expected of them. Every second bridge is under construction. The fatal incident in Italy was unacceptable.

Then there’s the push for battery-power, which means heavier vehicles. What will that do to infrastructure? An innovation like this has to be put into practice, away from emotions and lack of harmonisation.

**What about powertrains?**

There are other means of improving CO2 emissions that just putting all the pressure on the fuel. It is a collective issue. There is now a dominant debate on fuels, which is an important part of decarbonisation.

But before you make an aggressive push on rapid change, you have to realise we lack an holistic approach on the difference between commercial vehicles and passenger cars.

Take the Eurovignette case: there's a push for cars to be included later than buses and coaches. Why? It makes no sense whatsoever. Buses take cars off the road. Good infrastructure and services take cars off the road.

**How quickly could operators ditch combustion engines though? Particularly buses.**

A study we carried out said

Continued on Page 9
complete renewal of half Europe’s fleet could not be possible before 2035.

But mayors are now taking it upon themselves to exclude combustion engines by 2025-2030. That would kill the commercial market and services if the right incentives aren’t put in place first.

Governments and mayors have to harmonise their approach. Moreover, private operators are not going to switch to hybrids if they’re not subsidised. The costs are nearly double.

Governments and mayors have to harmonise their approach. Moreover, private operators are not going to switch to hybrids if they’re not subsidised. The costs are nearly double.

Electric battery power seems to be problematic when it comes to heavy haulers. How do other options like hydrogen fare in your view?

We have a few members who have made pre-orders in some innovative truck models. Those companies are pioneers that want to drive the change and have the financial capacity to do so. It’s effectively a test for them.

Factors like autonomy and charging or refuelling time are the important things to consider.

We’re an agnostic industry and battery-power is not the best solution for all or even most applications. Even with our members who provide taxi services, they’re reporting dissatisfaction with charging. Time is money there and it’s lost every minute extra spent on recharging.

The technology is not mature for our industry yet.

The incoming Commission will be tasked with reviewing some of the transport legislation agreed by the outgoing executive. What changes will you be looking for there?

CO2 measuring methodology is one of them. We have to adopt a well-to-wheel approach. The efficiency of the vehicle and the decarbonisation potential of the fuel both have to be taken into account, because tail-pipe counting only isn’t enough. We’ll bet on the wrong horse otherwise.

Implementing that in 2022 is the time to do it and to ensure all new vehicles as of 2025. The EU will fail badly on its climate goals otherwise.

Where can the new Commission really makes changes to transport policy?

Amending existing legislation and designing an incentive scheme is the way forward. The Commission’s focus on electric-charging should also be targeted on urban areas, it’s not a long-distance solution, so don’t waste money on chargers for trucks that aren’t even on the market yet.

They need to pick the right battle and not just continue with what the last Commission did without listening to the industry.

Road transport is seen as the bad guys, because of Dieselgate and other reasons. But when you look at the internalisation of external costs, buses and trucks have the lowest carbon footprint compared to all other modes. A shift policy isn’t the right move.
For a world in motion

IRU - World Road Transport Organisation

European transport at a glance

Over 5 million jobs in around 1 million European road freight and passenger transport companies

75% of EU inland logistics conducted by road transport operators

Around €500 billion in road freight and passenger transport revenues

Bus and coach transport represent 30% of the collective mobility in the EU

Passenger and freight transport are expected to grow significantly by around 43% and 55% respectively by 2050

A more connected world is key to building more prosperous economies, so IRU and its partners promote clear and transparent standards necessary to build prosperity and growth.

Source: EU Energy Transport in figures, Directorate General for Energy, 2018

Continued on Page 10
Continued from Page 11

Prosperity

DIGITALISATION

FACT
The road transport industry incurred administrative costs amounting to €6 billion in 2016. Digitalisation will help to significantly reduce costs.

GOAL
- Enable road passenger and freight transport and logistics to speed up digitalisation.
- Ensure that all mobility service providers, including private taxi, coach and taxi companies, can access and operate within MoSi® platforms on reasonable and equal terms.

IRU CALL FOR EU ACTION
- Finalise the rules on digital freight and logistics information and actively support implementation, including with C-OSMs.
- Define an EU harmonised legal framework to govern data access and sharing within MoSi® platforms as a means of ensuring fair competition.

BREXIT

FACT
Each day, between 7,000 and 10,000 trucks use the Calais-Dover route alone. Every year, several million passengers cross the Channel by coach. Brexit therefore represents a major threat, especially in the event of a “no-deal” scenario.

GOAL
- Avoid a no-deal scenario and focus on implementing a post-Brexit EU-UK partnership agreement.
- Any agreement should ensure that the Brexiteers support trade, people, mobility and the additional costs for the road transport sector are minimised.

IRU CALL FOR EU ACTION
- Avoid quantitative market access criteria in the future post-Brexit EU-UK partnership to ensure seamless passenger transport by coach, road freight, multimodal transport and logistics.
- Consider the use of electronic customs solutions, such as eTRA, to minimise costs and the administrative burden.

MODAL COOPERATION

FACT
The current level of modal cooperation is insufficient. All freight and passenger transport modes should be used to establish a resource-efficient and sustainable EU transport system.

GOAL
- Abandon the forced modal shift policy and increase the efficiency and capacity of every mode of freight transport.
- Encourage more modal cooperation in passenger and freight transport, including the increased use of combined transport in the Alpine region.

IRU CALL FOR EU ACTION
- Use the upcoming revision of the EU transport policy to encourage intermodal cooperation instead of prioritising certain modes of transport over others.
- Create more incentives for road freight transport operators by enabling the EU-wide use of high capacity vehicles.
Prosperity

ACCESS TO THE PROFESSION AND TO THE MARKET FOR PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICES BY ROAD

**FACT**
Internet-based solutions to reach out to customers led to the development of new commercial passenger transport services by car with stricter integration into the existing regulatory boundaries.

Transport by bus and coach is the most socially inclusive, safest and environmentally friendly alternative to the use of private cars.

**GOAL**
- Guarantee a level playing field for all players active on the market of commercial transport by vehicles of maximum 9 passengers seats, such as taxi, ride-hailing and sharing or other similar services. Implement the same rules for the same service to ensure the protection and safety of passengers and drivers.
- Tap into the potential of intercity coach travel to provide passengers with better and more sustainable travel options, and create new business opportunities for operators.

**IRU CALL FOR EU ACTION**
- Set out new EU rules clarifying the professional requirements for drivers of vehicles of maximum 9 passengers seats offering commercial passenger transport and the requirements applicable to intermediaries offering these services, irrespective of whether the customer is matched via traditional call centres and interline platforms.
- Abolish the current legislation on market access rules for bus and coach services.

People are the heart of our industry, so IRU makes our roads safer for all, and tackles the root causes of the increasingly acute driver shortage by fostering harmonised rules and standards designed to ensure safer, fairer working conditions, and a better image of the industry.

**DRIVER SHORTAGE**

**FACT**
Europe is facing the most acute driver shortage in decades. The lack of drivers represents a real threat to the smooth functioning of supply chains, EU mobility and the economy.

**GOAL**
- Attract a new and diverse workforce to the driver profession.

**IRU CALL FOR EU ACTION**
- Adapt and refine legislation to facilitate entry into the profession.
- Ensure the uniform interpretation by all Member States of the EU law setting 18 as the minimum age for fully trained/truck drivers for both national and international operations, and allow training to start from the age of 16.
- Provide financial support for driver training.
- Implement global/Visa (U-VISA) procedures in all EU Member States.
People

SAFE AND SECURE TRUCK PARKING AREAS

FACT
Europe is lacking 100,000 parking places for truck drivers to take their rest, while most of the existing parking areas for 300,000 trucks are below acceptable standards.

GOAL
- Roll-out the EU network of comfortable, safe and secure truck parking areas in Europe.
- Increase the overall number of parking places.

IBU CALL FOR EU ACTION
- Establish a European strategy, action plan and standards, including via a Commission implementing act, to set up sufficient safe and secure truck parking areas.
- Make the development of safe and secure truck parking areas a policy priority and funding priority.

People

ENFORCEMENT

FACT
Europe lacks a coherent and comprehensive vision and strategy on the enforcement of road transport rules.

GOAL
- Achieve aligned implementation, application and enforcement of the road transport-related rules across all EU Member States.
- Make digitization of road transport enforcement an EU policy priority, including for the measures to be adopted under the EU Mobility Package.

IBU CALL FOR EU ACTION
- Call for a dedicated proposal from the European Commission on digital enforcement.

People

DRIVING AND REST TIME RULES

FACT
Current rules are not adapted for European coach tourism drivers and prevent them from offering safe, competitive and convenient services to tourists in Europe.

GOAL
- Tailor driving and rest time rules to the specific needs of the coach tourism industry as to support tourism and Europe’s position as a leading global tourist destination.

IBU CALL FOR EU ACTION
- Call for the European Commission to propose adapted rules for coach tourism drivers by 2021.

Continued on Page 13
The world is facing a climate emergency, so IRU and our partners advocate a transport, mobility and logistics world in which sustainability becomes a universal, empowering tool to guarantee business success.

**FACT**

The existence of a wide range of vehicle types and market segments calls for a myriad of solutions. Fuel efficiency legislation must therefore remain realistic and technology neutral.

**GOAL**

- Encourage a greater use of renewable and alternative energy sources.
- Allow all alternative fuel options to play a role in the decarbonisation of all types of commercial road transport operations.

**IRU CALL FOR EU ACTION**

- Implement a new CO₂ methodology based on the well-to-wheel approach in 2023 and apply it to new vehicles registered as of 2015.

---

**MARKET UPTAKE OF CLEANER AND SAFER TECHNOLOGIES**

**FACT**

Cleaner and safer technologies must be commercially viable for operators. Pushing alternatives before there is a business case risks either slowing down investments in fleet renewal or harming the wider economy by raising transport prices.

**GOAL**

- Accompany and reward road transport operators that are willing to take financial risks to pilot decarbonisation and safety enhancing technologies.
- Increase the use of high capacity vehicles for logistics and facilitate collective passenger transport by bus, coach and shared mobility by taxi across Europe.

**IRU CALL FOR EU ACTION**

- Ensure that sufficient financial mechanisms exist, including by using the revenue from road transport taxes, charges and duties, to promote fleet renewal and accelerate the full roll-out of appropriate alternative fuels infrastructure.
- Use the ‘Cronographe’ legislation to incentivise the use of alternative-fuel vehicles and road transport-related projects, and avoid unfair situations which favour charges for buses and coaches but not for private cars.
- Implement an action plan to accelerate the market uptake of high capacity vehicles and harmonise their EU-wide use.
Continued from Page 15

**Environment**

**URBAN VEHICLE ACCESS REGULATIONS (UVARs)**

**FACT**
Locally-defined vehicle access rules without any EU or national harmonisation create legal, operational and economic uncertainty for road transport operators.

**GOAL**
- Avoid a patchwork of national UVARs which ignore market realities and would eventually hinder local economies and people’s mobility.

**IRU CALL FOR EU ACTION**
- Set out EU rules to harmonise local decision-making and ensure stakeholder consultation, the assessment of impacts, respect for EU principles of proportionality and technology neutrality, and EU-wide communication of local rules.
- Take into account technological constraints and establish reasonable time frames for the implementation of UVARs while promoting research and market uptake.