News from Brussels – November 2021

Hi!

Here is this month's newsletter from Brussels where we take a look at what's going on at the EU level and at relevant news from UITP (The International Association of Public Transport).

COVID-19

National Resilience and Recovery Plans
Sweden's National Recovery and Resilience plan (NRRP) has still not been assessed. It is amongst the last ones to be approved by the Commission.
As a reminder, all current draft assessments by the Commission can be found here. *Please note that the UITP Europe Department has published a report (available on demand) that includes a structured and benchmarked overview of the proposed investment and policy measures related to local public transport of all the NRRPs assessed by the European Commission.*

EU legislation and initiatives

This month was quiet in terms of EU legislation as the European Commission prepares for the traditional end of the year publications and end of presidency council meetings in December that should conclude some of the transport files of the year.

Driving and rest times
This month, the EU launched a public consultation on a possible targeted revision of the driving and rest time rules for occasional bus and coach drivers, as set out in Regulation (EC) No 561/2006. The consultation is open until February 15th 2022 and is accessible here.
> «*The aim of the consultation is two-fold:*
> *(1) to gather views and experiences on the current rules, in terms of working conditions, stress and fatigue of drivers, difficulties with compliance and regulatory costs, as well as their role in responding to the challenges caused by events such as the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic;*
> *(2) to help assess the advantages and disadvantages of several options for potential changes.*»

What to expect and watch out for on 14th December?
On 14th December, the European Commission has announced that it will publish three initiatives that are extremely relevant for our sector.

Urban Mobility Framework
The much-anticipated Urban Mobility Framework, set to replace the last Urban Mobility Package adopted in 2013, should not include any legislative or binding measures in any way. For that reason, the package is not deemed a top priority by the European Commissioner for Transport, Ms Adina Vălean. For our sector however, it remains a very important document that will orient

strategic policy decisions in the years to come. For instance, it is likely to have an impact on the priorities that should feature in SUMPs (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans). UITP, alongside a coalition of 12 European partners, has called on the European Commission *not to miss this opportunity to make modal shift a strategic objective for the years to come*. A recent open letter (here) sets out all of the elements UITP and its partners hope to see in the Framework on December 14th. UITP's general position paper on the Urban Mobility Framework is available here.

ITS Directive

One of the main legislative proposals to be published on December 14th is the proposal for the revision of the ITS Directive (the current version of the Directive is available here). From what we know so far, there should be no new delegated acts. However, the Commission should be asking from the co-legislators for the power to expand and revise the current delegated acts. Moreover, this power could include the ability to render compulsory the production of certain types of data deemed "essential". This could be a problem because it would mean that *public transport operators and authorities that don't already produce certain required datasets (such as real-time information) would suddenly be required to invest in systems capable of producing / creating such data*. This would be an entirely new obligation never before seen at EU level and would not necessarily be accompanied by the corresponding funding tools.

TEN-T Regulation

The current Trans European Transport Network (TEN-T) Regulation (here) identifies the cross-national transport lines as well as the urban nodes connected to them that are deemed priorities for investment and development by the EU. The Regulation also identifies projects of common interest and specifies the requirements to be complied with for the management of the infrastructure. The identified urban nodes in each Member State are listed in Annex II of the Regulation. One of the likely changes to be introduced by the proposal for the revision of the TEN-T Regulation on December 14th will be that *SUMPs could be made mandatory for those cities identified as urban nodes in the Regulation*.

Eurovignette – final agreement between the co-legislators

Road charging is a national choice in the EU, and member states can choose whether or not to introduce it on their territory. However, if they do opt to levy charges, they must follow certain common rules laid down in the Eurovignette directive. The Commission presented the proposal for a revised Eurovignette directive in May 2017, as part of the first mobility package.

Two important aspects for the urban transport sector are to be noted:

1. *buses can be excluded from the scope*: Member states retain the right to charge the various modes of road transport differently. For instance, «member states may decide not to charge buses at all».

2. some of the optional charges levied must be *earmarked to «address congestion issues, or to develop sustainable transport and mobility in general*».

A good summary of the main elements of the agreement on the revised Eurovignette Directive is available here. The Council press release on the final inter-institutional agreement is here.

Once the revised directive is published, member states will have two years to incorporate the provisions into their national law.

Fees and charges to the European Rail Agency

The Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1903 of 29 October 2021 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/764 on the fees and charges payable to the European Union Agency for Railways and their conditions of payment was published in the Official Journal of the EU on November 3rd (here). Indeed, while the larger part of costs generated by the activities of the Agency is covered by the EU budget, the Agency is also required to levy fees and charges for the issuing of vehicle (type) authorisations, single safety certificates and European rail traffic management system ('ERTMS') approvals, as well as the provision of other services. However, the current fees regime has not been sufficient in the previous years to cover the Agency's costs. Therefore the current regulation introduces a _fixed fees regime that should enhance the predictability of the envisaged cost per application with specific reduction applicable to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises._

Understanding the EU better – a very unofficial glossary of EU terms!

The EU can seem quite far away at times, the legislative procedure can seem obscure and the jargon impenetrable. This is why, every month, we take a closer look at one of the cogs in the EU machinery, in relation with a relevant piece of EU legislation for the public transport sector.

This month's newsletter is a little different as we present a very unofficial glossary of the most frequently used "EU expressions and words" of the past newsletters. Hopefully, this glossary will help you understand not only these newsletters better, but also any other source of EU news. Don't hesitate to let me know if you think the glossary would benefit from additional entries! Just a brief disclaimer also that the following definitions are by no means entirely accurate and are for the most part, a little sarcastic and/or over-exaggerations!

Here goes:

Unofficial EU Transport Glossary

'Association' / 'Community' / 'Federation'
> → a lobbying organisation
> _ex: "the International Association of Public Transport (UITP), the European Rail Community (CER) and the European Passenger Federation (EPF) call on the European Commission to..."_

Delegated act / Implementing act
> → laws passed by the European Commission rather than the co-legislators
> _ex: the Multimodal Travel Information Services Regulation (MMTIS) is a delegated regulation of the ITS Directive_

Directives / Regulations
→ EU laws
ex: the revised Eurovignette Directive will be applicable acros all the EU member states and Norway.

European Council
→ meeting place for the heads of State or government of the EU
ex: the European Council approved the final Brexit deal

European Parliament / Council
→ Co-legislators of the EU legislative process
ex: the Council has agreed agreed its position ('general approach') on the proposal for a Digital Services Act

EU Green Deal
→ any legislative or non-legislative policy measure with the aim of ensuring our planet remains inhabitable.
ex: the Energy Taxation Directive, the Urban Mobility Framework, the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive are all being revised or adopted in the context of the Green Deal

Implementation / transposition
→ what happens after a Directive has been published in the Official Journal of the EU and before it applies in a Member State
ex: Members States will have two years to implement / transpose the revised Eurovignette Directive into national law

MFF: Multiannual Financial Framework
→ the EU's overarching budget
ex: the Member States are struggling to reach an agreement on the MFF

Permanent representation (or 'PermRep')
→ National embassy in Brussels
ex: the Swedish PermRep is organising an event to understand the main challenges facing the coming French presidency of the Council

Proposal for a...
→ a draft law / a bill
ex: the proposal for a revision of the ITS Directive will be presented on December 14th

Public consultation
→ online multiple choice questionnaires the European Commission is obliged to carry out everytime it publishes a new initiative

ex: the European Commission recently opened a public consultation on a revision of the driving and rest time rules for occasional bus and coach drivers

Roadmap

→ a very brief, often extremely confusing, impact assessment of upcoming initiatives open for feedback for a 4-week period. Generally followed by a more detailed public consultation
ex: the roadmap on the Multimodal Digital Mobility Services (MDMS) closed on November 2nd and the Commission is now expected to publish a public consultation

Shadow rapporteur

→ Members of the European Parliament from different political parties in charge of representing their group's positions on a given legislation
ex: the shadow rapporteurs and the rapporteur agreed on compromise amendments on the proposal for an Open Data Directive

SUMP: Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

→ more than a Transport plan, less than a city-wide urbanisation plan
ex: in the future, cities on the TEN-T corridors could have the obligation to adopt SUMPs

TEN-T: Trans-European Transport Network

→ the main transport corridors across national borders
ex: helping develop the TEN-T is a priority for EU financial investments

Trilogues

→ negotiations between the co-legislators and the Commission allowing them to reach an agreement faster and thus to accelerate the legislative process
ex: the trilogues on the Eurovignette Directive have been successful. The Directive will now officially be adopted by the co-legislators before being published in the Official Journal of the EU

Urban nodes

→ big cities sitting at the intersection of TEN-T corridors
ex: Göteberg, Stockholm, Malmö, Helsinki and Turku are all urban nodes

Publications

- **UITP Win Back Passengers Brochure**

Since the outbreak of the crisis, UITP has published regular reports about all measures taken by its members, with the help of a dedicated global "COVID Task Force". Areas covered include cleaning facilities, defining a new transport offer and fare policy, implementing innovative tools to organise passenger flows, communication...
With the (hopefully) end of the crisis in sight, it is time to assess the challenges and benefits of all the new measures that have been tested, rate them according to their effectiveness to win back

passengers and draw conclusions for the post-COVID era. ***UITP is therefore pleased to present the first assessment of measures implemented since the beginning of the pandemic available here.***

- **Research for TRAN Committee - Alternative fuel infrastructures for heavy-duty vehicles**

Ahead of the discussions on the proposal for the revision of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive, the TRAN Committee of the European Parliament commissioned a study that looks into the current state of play of such infrastructure across the EU and third countries such as Norway and China. Even though the study focuses mainly on trucks, some parts are relevant for buses and will be of interest to the urban transport sector. The study is available here.

Events

- **8ᵗʰ December: Building back better with rail 2021**

CER (the European Rail Community) and the Slovenian presidency of the Council are organising a joint event that will take a look at the Recovery and Resilience Facility spending so far. The speakers will also be asked to comment on the priorities of national recovery programmes, and the best possible allocation of future funding. More information on the event is available here.

- **13ᵗʰ December: MMTIS Revision – Overcoming challenges, creating new opportunities**

As the lead project manager of DATA4PT, UITP is organising an online webinar on the upcoming revision of the Multimodal Travel Information Services (MMTIS) Regulation. DATA4PT is an EU-funded project in charge of developing the necessary data exchange standards and models the MMTIS regulation requires (Transmodel, NetEX, SIRI).

The conference should help map out any technical work still needed and will focus specifically on standardisation needs. Registration is possible here.

Not a UITP member yet?

As a UITP member, you can share knowledge with a network of more than 200 public transport authorities worldwide. Read more at https://www.uitp.org/membership-benefits or contact Camille Roy in UITP: camille.roy@uitp.org

Any questions? Please contact me at annabelle.huet@uitp.org
Kind regards,
Annabelle