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Subject: Clean Power for Transport

- Communication from the Commission on "Clean Power for Transport: A European alternative fuels strategy"
- Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure

= Presentation by the Commission

= Exchange of views

1. Introduction

On 25 January 2013, the Commission transmitted to the Council and the European Parliament the above mentioned Communication and proposal for a Directive. The aim of the "Clean Power for Transport" initiative is to reduce oil dependency and contribute to the achievement of the target, established for 2050 in the Transport White Paper, of cutting carbon emissions in transport by 60%, by accelerating the market uptake of alternative fuels and vehicles in all transport modes in the EU.

The main alternative fuel options are electricity, hydrogen, biofuels, natural gas (in the forms of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), or Gas-To-Liquid (GTL)), and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). Lack of alternative fuel infrastructure and common standards is considered a major obstacle to the market introduction of alternative fuels and consumer acceptance.

2. The Communication from the Commission

The Communication from the Commission sets out a comprehensive alternative fuels strategy and the road to its implementation covering all modes of transport. It aims at establishing a long-term policy framework to guide technological development and investments in the deployment of these fuels and give confidence to consumers.

3. The proposal for a Directive

The general objective of this proposal is to ensure the provision of sufficient infrastructure network for alternative fuels, thereby accelerating their uptake by the EU market. It will also identify possible EU actions to stimulate the use of EU alternative fuels and provide the industry, public sector and consumers with a clear and coherent vision on the market developments of alternative fuel transport systems. It is proposed that by 2020:

- A minimum number of recharging points for electric vehicles shall be required for each Member State, based on the number of electric vehicles planned in the Member States. 10% of these points should be publicly accessible.
- Existing hydrogen refuelling stations shall be complemented to form a network in those countries where activities on hydrogen powered fuel-cell vehicles are already under way. Publicly accessible refuelling points shall be available within maximum distances of 300 km.
- LNG refuelling stations for waterborne vessels shall be installed in all maritime and inland ports of the trans-European transport (TEN-T) core network by 2020 (2025 for inland ports).

- LNG refuelling points for road transport vehicles shall be installed along the roads of the Trans-European Transport Core Network, within maximum distances of 400 km.
- CNG publicly accessible refuelling points shall be available Europe-wide, within maximum distances of 150 km.

By December 2015 common EU standards shall be developed so that all recharging stations for Electric Vehicles, hydrogen, CNG, and LNG refuelling for road transport vehicles, as well as LNG refuelling facilities for waterborne vessels could be connected and interoperable. It should be underlined that concerning electric vehicles the Commission proposes a common plug for Europe.

4. Work within Council bodies

At its meeting on 15 February 2015, the Working Party on Transport, Intermodal Questions and Networks held a first exchange of views on the above documents, immediately after a presentation by the Commission. The Working Group also examined the impact assessment related to the proposal for a directive.

A majority of Member States welcomed the Commission proposal and acknowledged the need for harmonization and standardization. However, many Member States expressed concern as regards the sources of funding of the measures proposed and a number of deadlines to achieve the targets set, which seem very difficult to implement or even unrealistic, and would like more flexibility. Some Member States argued that a more goal-based approach rather than a prescriptive one should be pursued. Other Member States pointed out that specific regional or territorial conditions, for example winter conditions, have not been taken into account and should be included in the draft Directive. Member States are ready to work on the proposal in order to find the optimal way of achieving the objectives of the “Clean power for transport” initiative.

All delegations have a general scrutiny reservation on the proposal for a Directive. DK, FI, MT, PL and UK have a parliamentary scrutiny reservation on the same text.

5. Conclusions

Coreper is invited to take note of the report on the above documents and to submit it to the TTE Council, at its meeting on 11 March 2013, with a view to preparing the ministerial exchange of views on the above Communication and draft Directive.
