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Information Note from the Commission**AOB EU-Russia transport relations**

Over the last months, the relations between the EU and the Russian Federation in the overall transport area have deteriorated; therefore a European joint response is needed.

- In **aviation**, Russia does not respect the agreement to phase-out **Siberian overflight royalties** ("Agreed Principles"). Besides, Russia's acceptance of the concept of **EU airline designation** seems to be at risk. Russia is making a link between either of these two issues (Siberian overflights and EU designation) and the resolution of the ETS aviation discussion at international level that is directly contrary to their international obligations. Some Member States risks being negatively impacted by the Russian announcement that the moratorium on the enforcement of the visa requirement for civilian aircrew members will come to an end on 31 October 2012.
- In **road transport**, Russia does not respect its commitments to stop **discriminatory road charge fees**. Operators from 13 EU Member States are affected by this. The Russian authorities (at Minister's level) committed to abolish this scheme by January 2012. However, the situation has not changed yet and it seems as if respective reforms are postponed at least until 2014. Besides, in 2010 Russia unilaterally decided to reduce the number of **road licences (ECMT)** arguing that certain Member States have similar restrictions in place. The reduction of ECMT licenses has caused significant problems for Poland and for the Baltic countries.

- In the **rail** area, 9 EU Member States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) which are also members of OSJD (Organisation for Co-Operation between Railways) face difficulties attributable to the lack of cooperation between the EU and OSJD, as parts of the OSJD rules are incompatible with EU law. Another issue is that Russia does not respect its commitment to stop applying **discriminatory rates for rail freight in order to favour Russian ports in the Baltic Sea.**

As a consequence, technical cooperation in the framework of the EU-Russia transport dialogues as well as joint air transport projects with Russia have been put on hold until Russia respects its commitments. The Commission is temporarily opposed to respective EIB projects in the aviation sector and has taken a similarly critical approach vis-à-vis EBRD loans in the aviation sector.
