



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS & ENERGY

Sectoral Committee

Weekly Update
29.01.10

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.....news from the EU Presidency

The Presidency will promote interconnection, renewable energy and the Digital Single Market



On the 27th of January, the Spanish Minister of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Miguel Sebastián, underlined the Presidency's main aim of ensuring that the Energy Action Plan 2010-2014, which will focus on interconnection and regulatory harmonisation, is adopted at the next European Council in the spring.

In terms of interconnection, the Presidency supports gradually increasing Member States' interconnection capacity to reach 10% of the installed power capacity.

Carrying out the priority electrical interconnection projects that have already been agreed upon will also play a vital role in achieving the target set. With regard to regulatory harmonisation, Sebastián emphasised the role that will be played by the future Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators which the Spanish Presidency will promote during its term.

Dialogue with third country energy consumers, producers and transit countries will be the major issues that influence the security of the energy supply in Europe.

In terms of renewable energy, Sebastián stated that "transposing the EU regulations into each country's legislation" is a priority.

The Mediterranean Solar Plan (MSP) will be another major work area for the Presidency. Spain will organise the MSP Conference in Valencia which will take its conclusions to the EUROMED Summit in Barcelona in June 2010.

The Granada Strategy

With regard to the ICT sector, during the same appearance, the Minister announced that the Spanish Presidency will launch a new strategy for 2010-2015, called "For a digital Europe: the Granada Strategy. Information and Communication Technologies, Productivity and Quality of Life" which will replace the i2010 initiative and will be main issue dealt with in the informal meeting of the Council of Ministers of Telecommunications to be held in Granada on 19 and 20 April.

The creation of a Digital Single Market, which the Spanish Presidency hopes will be the "fifth

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freedom" of the EU, will enable cross-border e-commerce to grow and will boost the development of the digital goods and services industry, particularly the digital content industry.

The Spanish Presidency will therefore determine the objectives, instruments and measures aimed at closing the so-called "second digital divide" and will promote the development of next generation networks, ensuring the necessary financial support and the definition of a favourable regulatory framework.

The Spanish Minister defined the five pillars of the future Granada Strategy: *"the role of ICTs in achieving an environmentally sustainable model, the Digital Single Market, the next generation networks, overcoming the second digital divide and the Charter of Users' Rights"*.

Alongside these pillars are the issues of improving security in networks to protect intellectual property rights on the Internet and promoting the development of a harmonised framework for protecting information society indicators.

Horizon 2020 for industry

In terms of European industrial policy, Sebastián stressed that one of the Presidency's priorities will be to lay the foundations for the future European industrial policy, particularly in the automotive sector, with the electric vehicle as a driving force behind sustainability and the capacity for innovation in European industry.

Renewable energy, competitive industry and technology, through the development of software for charging batteries and the development of the smart grid and smart meters, will all come together through the electric vehicle.

The Spanish Presidency, he stated, *"will propose adopting a European strategy for the electric vehicle"*, a priority issue in the informal meeting on competitiveness which will be held in San Sebastián in February. Moreover, the Presidency's aim is that the conclusions of the Competitiveness Council in May include the commitments that the Member States need to assume in order to promote this type of vehicle.



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the European Parliament - Committee on Transport

Spain wants a "wide consensus" in the EU on air safety and full-body scanners

When speaking to the EP's Committee on Transport the Spanish Minister of Public Works, José Blanco, said he is in favour of the European Union reaching a "wide consensus" on an agreement in the EU on air safety and the use of full-body scanners.



"The Spanish Presidency agrees with the Committee on the need for decisions to be made on this matter by general consensus. European citizens would not understand if we did not reach an agreement on such an important matter", the Spanish Minister told the Committee.

After the recent incident in Detroit (USA), José Blanco stated that the main responsibility is to improve security in airports using technology, achieving a maximum level of security, although "without infringing on citizen's rights" he added.

Issues related to security matters in transport will be the focus of the working meetings of the Informal Council of Ministers to be held on 12 and 13 February in the Spanish city of A Coruña.

He stated that a proposal is going to be shaped that will be presented to the European Commission and to European ministers before this meeting takes place. The Spanish Presidency is going to promote the proposal from the Committee on the reform of European regulations on the investigation of air accidents and will go further to acknowledge passengers' rights to be informed when a scheduled flight is suspended or delayed.



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Commission authorises state aid to a Franco-Spanish Motorways of the Sea project and includes it among the twenty-two selected projects for Marco Polo financing

On the 27th of January, the European Commission gave its green light for the public financing from France and Spain to the Fres Mos project. It will link the French port of Nantes-Saint Nazaire with the Spanish port of Gijon, and will be operated by GLD Atlantique. This Motorways of the Sea project will also receive an EU grant in the framework of the 2009 Marco Polo II call for proposals, in which the Commission selected twenty-two projects with overall funding of €66.3 million. With these projects, the Commission expects to shift a total of 16.8 billion tonne/kilometres of freight away from the roads.

The EU Marco Polo II programme selects each year a range of projects that aim to shift freight from the road onto more environmentally-friendly transport modes, such as railway, inland waterway and maritime transport. The EU initiative 'Motorways of the Sea' aims to shift freight transport from road to sea, thereby reducing congestion on roads and decreasing the environmental impact of freight transport and can be supported by State Aid that is compatible with the EU rules

The Fres Mos Motorways of the Sea project intends to capture between three and five per cent of the road traffic passing through the western part of the Pyrenees. It is expected to reduce road traffic by around 40 000 trucks a year, a figure that is expected to double in five years.

The Fres Mos project will receive from the Marco Polo II programme EU funding of approximately €4 million. Furthermore, the Commission also approved a complementary state aid for the project amounting to €30 million where France and Spain will each grant €15 million. The overall financing of the project will be limited to 35 % of the eligible costs within the first four years of its operation in line with the applicable EU rules on State aid.

The Commission concluded that the State aid granted by France and Spain in this case is compatible with the internal market, since it significantly contributes to the EU's strategy for developing a network of Motorways of the Sea, while its impact on competition and intra Union trade is limited.



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New EU Telecoms Regulator gets to work

The 28th of January marks the start of a new era for telecoms in the EU. The telecoms regulators of the 27 EU countries will meet for the first time in Brussels as members of the new Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC). The new European telecoms regulator BEREC has been established following the adoption by the Council and Parliament of the new EU Telecoms rules in December 2009. With 12 fixed and 10 mobile telecoms companies offering services in many other EU Member States and hundreds of service providers operating across borders, BEREC will play a crucial role in strengthening the single telecoms market and consistent regulation across Europe. Assisted by an office with expert staff, the new European telecoms regulatory body will in particular help ensure fair competition in the single telecoms market. In 2008, Europe's telecoms sector revenues accounted for €351 billion.



The new European telecoms body BEREC will give important expert opinions on the functioning of the telecoms market in the EU. BEREC will also advise, support and complement the independent work of national telecoms regulators, especially when it comes to regulatory decisions with cross-border aspects.

BEREC is made up of the heads of the 27 national telecoms regulators and is assisted by an office that provides the necessary professional and administrative support to BEREC's work. Most decisions will be taken by two-thirds majority and by simple majority when BEREC gives opinions in the context of the

Commission's analysis of measures notified to the European Commission by national regulators.

BEREC replaces the "European Regulators Group", a loose grouping of national regulators that could operate on the basis of consensus alone and was not integrated into the EU's regulatory process.

Background:

As a result of the EU telecoms reform, 500 million EU citizens can today benefit from more consumer choice through enhanced competition on Europe's telecoms markets, with better coverage over fast internet broadband connections across the EU, and from a stronger entrenchment of their right to privacy in their telecommunications. While the new telecoms regulator BEREC is taking up its functions today, the implementation of the whole telecoms reform package into national legislations in the 27 EU Member States is due by June 2011.