



Press Release

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FEPORT commends the EU Commission's efforts to propose an ambitious Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy to achieve the objectives of the Green Deal but underlines the need to safeguard the competitiveness of EU port ecosystems through an enabling framework

FEPORT commends the EU Commission's efforts to propose an ambitious Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy to achieve the objectives of the Green Deal. The newly adopted Strategy is in many ways the adequate response to the challenges that society and businesses are facing.

Overcoming the COVID-19 crisis and restoring growth will require a total mobilization of all actors as well as more resources from public and private economic actors.

Private port companies and terminals have shown their capacity to mobilize during the recent crisis and their willingness to adapt and to innovate. To continue to do so, they call on EU regulators to provide them with legal certainty and a real level playing field.

"COVID-19 has allowed people and policy makers to realize how essential transport workers are. In ports, all port stakeholders have remained mobilized to ensure the security of supplies and to serve EU Economy. The competitiveness of private port companies and terminals also matters. Let us not forget that the EU is not the only continent and that private port companies and terminals are exposed to fierce competition within the internal market and outside the EU."

FEPORT calls on EU regulators to restore the level playing field within the internal market in terms of taxation. This is as important as the discussion with respect to the effects of public subsidies granted to foreign companies operating in the EU and competing with private EU companies.

"The EU response to the crisis has been and is in many respects impressive and forward looking be it on environment, growth or recovery. Private port companies and terminals appreciate the acknowledgement regarding the role of ports in the smart and sustainable mobility Strategy but clearer indications on how some objectives will be achieved are needed", commented Lamia Kerdjoudj-Belkaid, FEPORT Secretary General.

"Smart, Sustainable, resilient port operations will be even more possible in the future if there is an enabling support to private investments in ports. It is for instance very welcomed that seaport infrastructure and superstructure dedicated to the transshipment of freight between modes of

transport are included in the maritime taxonomy criteria, but cargo handling equipment as well as operations should also be”, said FEPOR Secretary General.

FEPOR welcomes that the newly adopted Strategy includes a revision of the Rail Freight Corridors Regulation and the TEN-T Regulation. It is indeed crucial that these two Regulations are addressed together given their mutual importance to one another. The COVID-19 crisis has shown that rail freight can be an attractive and a reliable service when capacities are secured. It will be essential to address the issue of capacity management during the impact assessment of the Rail Freight Corridors Regulation.

“If the set of rules applying to environmentally friendly modes such as rail become “real incentives” for modal shift, then port operations will also become smarter and more sustainable. FEPOR pleads for a more “business friendly” framework for rail which does not impose cumbersome administrative requirements that discourage private port companies and terminals from investing into rail services”, added FEPOR Secretary General.

“FEPOR members have the ambition to play a real role in favour of the attractiveness and the competitiveness of EU ports but they need legal clarity to achieve this goal. Besides, a needed review of some EU competition rules, a clear governance in terms data sharing will certainly pave the way for the resilience of the port sector and the whole maritime logistics chain. In this respect, FEPOR welcomes the Commission’s intention to propose further actions to build a European Common Mobility Data Space and the principle of technology neutrality”, continued Lamia Kerdjoudj-Belkaid.

“Private port companies’ and terminals’ activities are not ancillary ones. European ports provide more than bunkering facilities or storage capacities. They are solid partners to achieve the objectives of the Green Deal but not only. Private port companies and terminals are innovators, contributors to value chains and investors in equipment, in intermodal solutions, in digitalization and in new jobs. They therefore deserve clear signs of recognition and political support with respect to their competitiveness. We look forward to having the opportunity to discuss about the comprehensive dimension of the EU port ecosystems with the EU Commission’s services”, concluded FEPOR Secretary General.

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