



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its opinion on the Communication 'A strategic rollout plan to outline a set of supplementary actions to support the rapid deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure' {COM(2021) 560 final}.

It welcomes the Camera Deputaților's support to the strategic plan presented in this Communication.

Regarding the use of advanced biofuels in transport, the Commission would like to stress that it respects the principle of technological neutrality. The Commission has proposed to increase the ambition on renewable transport fuels under the proposal for the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive. As outlined in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, scaling up the use of advanced biofuels is particularly relevant for sectors where other alternative technologies are at low maturity at present, including aviation and waterborne transport.

Regarding shipping, the proposal for the FuelEU Maritime Regulation will establish a demand for sustainable alternative fuels in maritime transport. The proposal for a regulation on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure (AFIR) sets mandatory deployment targets to shore-side electricity supply in TEN-T core and comprehensive maritime ports. In addition, it requires that a core network of refuelling points for liquid natural gas at maritime ports should be available by 2025. The new Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Facility under the Connecting Europe Facility 2 (CEF2) is co-funding alternative fuels infrastructure in ports, in addition to financial support envisaged by Member States under the Recovery and Resilience Facility or the InvestEU programme. While CEF2 primarily focuses on infrastructure, support to vessels can be addressed through those other instruments.

In response to the Camera Deputaților's recommendation regarding the exchange of experience to develop the data infrastructure of small ports in the Black Sea, the Commission would like to draw Camera Deputaților's attention to the current process of implementation

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of the Regulations on a European Maritime Single Window environment (EMSWe) and on electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI). The EMSWe Regulation will set out a harmonised data set for communication between ships and ports, as well as some harmonised components for reporting (harmonised reporting module, access management system). This will facilitate the task of developing data infrastructure – the National Maritime Single Window – at the national level equipping also the smaller ports and providing them with the same capability of data exchange. In addition, the eFTI Regulation will ensure data interoperability with the EMSWe environment and facilitate re-use of data and cargo information exchange along the entire logistics chain within the hinterland.

The Commission agrees with Camera Deputaţilor’s suggestion to implement sufficiently harmonised rules enabling a level playing field in the European Union, in particular to facilitate the entry of small and medium-sized enterprises into the market for recharging stations and services. Recital (25) of the proposed AFIR Regulation explicitly recognises this need. The Commission will continue monitoring the development of the recharging market, in particular through its competences as a competition regulator, and take action in case it finds anti-competitive practices. In addition, public authorities at all levels of governance play an important role in developing this market and reducing the barriers for new entry of small and medium-sized enterprises into this market. In this respect, the Sustainable Transport Forum (STF) as the main expert group of the Commission in the field of alternative fuels infrastructure is working on the development of guidance to improve and accelerate permitting and grid connection procedures, considered one of the most important barriers for new projects by investors in recharging infrastructure.

The Commission acknowledges the suggestion to draw up recommendations at EU level to adapt recharging and refuelling infrastructure to the requirements of the management of urban and peri-urban green areas and to maintain the aesthetic of rural and urban landscapes, in line with the objectives of the European Union. Noteworthy in this context is the set of Recommendations for public authorities for procuring, awarding concessions, licences and/or granting support for electric recharging infrastructure for passenger cars and vans, equally drawn up by the STF (the 2020 STF recommendations for recharging point tenders). These include recommendations to reduce the visual pollution and reduce the occupancy of public space by recharging points in cities and their agglomerations.

Supporting the roll out of sufficient recharging infrastructure for the public transport vehicle fleet is a key priority for rural and urban areas alike.

The Commission also agrees with the recommendation to further support innovation in battery development. This is a key priority at European level, with different financial instruments supporting this area of action, particularly the InvestEU programme, notably its Sustainable Infrastructure window. InvestEU guarantee can support financing of more risky project promoters such as SMEs and innovative companies in the areas of smart and sustainable transport.

The Commission acknowledges the recommendation to adapt the requirements and technical specifications for alternative fuel infrastructure and rolling stock to the conditions of restricted rail networks and the local cultural landscape, as well as financing smaller demonstration projects in rural areas, alongside large-scale ones. As concerns rail, the

European Agency for Railways (ERA), which is leading the development of technical requirements and specifications for railways, will follow it up if appropriate, based on a detailed analysis of the requirements and technical specifications which need to be adapted.

The Commission agrees that effective vocational education and training (VET) policies in the Member States are important for achieving the goal of promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change. As outlined in the new European Skills Agenda, Europe needs agile, resilient and future-proof VET systems, which can support young people to manage their entry to a changing labour market and ensure that adults access vocational programmes tailored to the twin green and digital transitions.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by Camera Deputaţilor and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Adina Vălean
Member of the Commission*