

Minutes of the Maritime, Road and Rail Policy Group Meeting

Minutes of the Customs Policy Group Meeting held at The Baltic Exchange, 38 St Mary's Axe, London, EC3 8BH. The Meeting was held on the 13th February 2019 commencing at 10.30 hours.

Agenda item 1 – Competition Statement

The Chair read out the Competition Statement at the commencement of the meeting

Agenda item 2- Agree the Minutes of the meeting of 21st November 2019

These were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair

Agenda item 3- Matters arising from the Minutes of the 21st November 2019

Both action points from the meeting had been discharged. There was a discussion regarding the paper submitted to CLECAT regarding the Bloc Exemption Regulation, where the Surface PG's views had been largely incorporated into the former's response to the Commission.

When asked if BIFA's views were still taken on board by CLECAT and put to the Commission, the Secretariat advised that they were because:-

- The Association consistently responded
- We were seen as providing pragmatic and sensible responses.

Agenda item 4 Market Matters

These were covered by a presentation distributed after the meeting.

Agenda item 5 Regional Consultants reports

Northern Ireland

- Members were concerned that there was even less information relative to Ireland being published by Government than for the rest of the United Kingdom
- The forwarding apprenticeship scheme was now being promoted and it was hoped that 10 freight forwarding apprentices would be employed in Northern Ireland by the end of 2019

Solent

- DP World were constructing a new facility to house the BIP, Border Force, CNS and DP Worlds operations.
- A SPIN meeting was scheduled for 14th March
- Stack utilisation was averaging 75% of total capacity which equated to 31,000 containers at any one time
- There was a significant issue regarding the number of empty containers being stored which disrupted operations
- On average trucks had to wait for 38 minutes prior to being served
- The percentage of containers being delivered/collected from the port by rail had declines from 35% to 33% of all such movements

There was a brief discussion regarding Verified Gross Mass and weighing procedures, in general fewer issues occurred at Southampton than Felixstowe, but no reason was identified.

Anglia, London East and Kent/East Sussex

- The main issue being raised by Members was Brexit, which was generating a lot of questions
- A seminar was planned in Ashford, Kent which would focus on DEFRA's planning for a D1ND scenario.

Scotland on North East

- The Rail link between Liverpool and Mossend was functioning well and had improved connectivity with England
- It was anticipated that Aberdeen's south Harbour would be opened in the summer of 2020
- The Port of Tyne was actively supporting the DfT's Maritime 2050 programme
- The Trans-Pennine upgrade had been severely criticised for not making any provision for freight and in particular loaded seafreight containers. It was noted that the Rail Freight Group had raised these concerns with the DfT highlighting that the decision did not support the Northern Powerhouse concept.

North West

- The main concerns amongst the Members, Ports and Airports related to Brexit
- The Liverpool dinner was to be held on the 21st February
- Some complaints had been received from Members about delays being experienced and additional costs being incurred as a result of HMRC's anti-fraud operation. It was noted that BIFA was in contact with HMRC on this point in an effort to reduce problems.

Agenda Item 6 IT and Customs Matters

A presentation was made with a health warning that it was only for a day one no deal scenario and that several of the points were under discussion and were still subject to amendment.

Regarding CDS, the meeting heard from the AFSS that the project was delayed:-

- Technical specifications had not been received by software developers
 - Therefore, software not written and testing unavailable
 - Focus on Day 1 no deal (D1 ND) preparations
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- The AFSS noted that few customs agents were purchasing CDS related software
 - Problems had been encountered collecting the additional data required

Software developers were concentrating on changes that might be required from 29th March if there was a D1 ND scenario, e.g. Transit and ICS. It was noted that HMRC, the CSP's and software developers were all currently focussing their efforts on upgrading CHIEF and that software systems were similarly upgraded and would be compatible.

The meeting heard that HMRC had assured trade that CHIEF had been upgraded to accommodate the increased volume of entries stemming from Brexit, which was welcomed.

Agenda Item 7 Dangerous Goods and the outcome of the MSC Flaminia investigation

Covered under a separate note to the Group

Agenda Item 8 Lines- Members concerns regarding their increased activity in the forwarding/logistics markets

Carried forward to the next Surface Policy Group Meeting

Agenda Item 9 Discussion on driver shortage

The RHA presented on this subject

Agenda item 10 Date and time of the next Surface PG

The next Surface Policy Group will be held at the Baltic Exchange on 26th June 2019.