

Keynote address by Ms Bulc

IRU Spring Cocktail, Brussels, 4 March 2015

Good evening ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the IRU for inviting me to this event. Spring is the time of year when nature is starting a new cycle, which we all very much look forward to. We could not find a better time to talk about a new agenda for transport, in particular for road transport.

Transport needs to become more sustainable and innovative. These are two of the main aspects that I want to underline during my mandate as Transport Commissioner. We need more innovation to drive jobs and growth and we need sustainability to ensure that our environmental and social needs go hand-in-hand with economic growth.

Road transport carries more passengers and freight than any other mode of transport. Similarly, without trucks or delivery vans, most of our shops would be empty. This makes road transport very important for people and businesses. But it also creates several challenges.

It is therefore obvious that road transport is part of my vision for the next five years of my mandate. The Commission is preparing a Road Package, some ideas on which I would briefly like to share with to you.

First "innovation". A lot of innovation has taken place in the road transport sector as far as vehicles are concerned. And, next week, the European Parliament will adopt the revision of our directive on weights and dimensions which will make vehicles more aerodynamic and give incentives to alternative propulsion systems, improving further the fuel-efficiency of vehicles. But more needs to be done, in particular to promote digitalisation. This will not only create new business opportunities, it will

also pave the way for new and value-added services for both people and businesses.

Interoperability and integration between modes of transport are other matters where a lot more could be done. Data is absolutely key in the context. Without common data standards and sharing of data, the EU transport map will remain as patchy as it is today. It will not be able to serve our Internal Market and the European competitiveness will suffer.

Road charging in the EU is a typical example of this patchwork. There are 12 different distance-based tolling schemes in the EU and 6 different time-based systems. It is clear that the current situation is not what the Commission had in mind when proposing the so-called EETS (European Electronic Tolling Service) Directive. The technology exists to make a single European tolling system possible. In my view, it is time to make it a reality.

Another priority relates to the functioning of the internal market. The Commission services recently launched an evaluation of existing legislation on access to the profession of road transport operator and on access to freight and passenger markets. I understand that IRU has been asked to participate in this evaluation. I can only encourage you to be fully part of the process of preparation of the road package.

As many of you know, we are currently seeing a lot of initiatives taken by Member States imposing own-rules or interpreting EU legislation in different ways. This creates new barriers for transport operators and transport users.

Integrating the Internal Market for road transport has to go hand-in-hand with social initiatives protecting workers and providing clear and uniform rules that can easily be controlled. We need a level playing field where competition is based on service and optimisation rather than on infringing social rights. During my mandate I want to promote a culture of compliance and co-responsibility of all actors involved in the transport operation chain.

We therefore need to clarify and, where necessary, propose modifications to existing legislation so that it can meet its objectives. Secondly

enforcement of social legislation should be strengthened. Thirdly, it is my intention to revive the dialogue with social partners and employers with a view to improve social and working conditions in the road transport sector. I would like to see concrete results out of this process, which could take the form of a "social code".

All in all, we plan to launch an ambitious and wide-ranging road package. I invite all of you to participate in the preparation of this initiative via the consultations, conferences and meetings that we will organise. In this way we will make sure that initiatives are pertinent and in line with expectations of all stakeholders, including the members of IRU.

I would also like to use this occasion to support the already on-going work between IRU and the Commission on passenger transport. The Smart Move awareness campaign aiming at increasing the use of buses and coaches as well as the Citizens Mobility Fora have generated some very useful recommendations, which we should build on.

We need to keep people in the focus of our future transport policies. There is a need for sustainable mobility solutions. These solutions should be cross-modal and include not only road transport but also on other modes of transport. Only in this way we will be able to deal with future challenges.

On this important note, I would like to thank IRU again for having invited me to this Spring Cocktail. I am convinced that we will have a close and fruitful corporation during my mandate. Please know that my door is always open.

I wish you all a very pleasant evening.