

Beat: Politics

Transport safety and consumer protection must be priority in COVID strategies

EP urges to coordinate efforts

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USPA NEWS - European Parliament's Transport Committee Chair welcomes the new relief measures, but urges EU ministers and the European Commission to better coordinate efforts to exit the crisis. After Wednesday's videoconference of EU transport ministers and the Commission's adoption of a relief package for the transport sector, there is still little clarity on the crisis exit strategy and not enough coordination to phase out the confinement measures across the European Union, she says.

"The EU has to act together and faster," she starts her statement the Parliament's Transport Committee Chair, Karima Delli. "The new proposals tabled by the Commission will provide some relief to the sector. The Parliament stands ready to act swiftly. We will decide on the next steps, possibly including urgency procedure, in the coming days," she added, and says: "I want to highlight a few vital points on passengers rights, working conditions for transport workers as well as proper protection when relaxing the containment measures."

On passenger rights, the Commission guidelines underline that the EU rules on passengers rights should strictly apply. "Passengers cannot be doubly victimised by the pandemic, by forcing them to accept vouchers instead of reimbursement," Karima Delli says. "The exceptional derogation in road transport shows driver's working conditions worsening: this has to remain a temporary measure and not become the new normal. I do not want truck drivers to be collateral victims of this crisis," she added. The negotiations on the Mobility Package have been very tough, "but in the long run we will improve driver's working conditions," she considers the Parliament's Transport Committee Chair.

"On relaxation of confinement measures, safety and proper personal protection has to remain our priority. Passengers should wear masks on buses, trains, planes and boats to reduce the spread of virus. When it comes to planes, it would be prudent to consider taking passengers' temperature before allowing them to board," she explains Karima Delli. And she concluded: "In our resolution on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, we call for action to ensure the health, safety and working conditions of transport workers and help transport companies to survive the crisis. It is of utmost importance that we protect our workers, help our companies and ensure passenger safety."

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