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VIOLETA BULC

Member of the European Commission

Ms Karima DELLI
Chair of the European's Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism
European Parliament
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Dear Ms Delli, *Karima*

The Commission has adopted on 13 March 2019 a Delegated Regulation on Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS) and I am writing to you to obtain your support for this Regulation that will lead to accelerate the rollout of C-ITS on European roads.

More than 25.000 people still lose their lives on our roads every year and 135.000 are seriously injured. This is despite the progress we have made since 2001 by investing in infrastructure and passive safety. To make matters worse, that positive trend seems to have tailed off. I find that unacceptable. That is why the Commission recently proposed a revision of the General Safety Regulation to make new advances on active safety. That is also why we need C-ITS to complement that and make a step-change by making mobility safer through direct interactions between road users and infrastructure (cooperative safety).

The benefits of cooperative safety are undisputed but they do become more effective as larger portions of the fleet are equipped. We therefore need to start deployment without any further delay. Because regardless of technology choices, it will take many years before C-ITS reaches its full effect. Because every day wasted, waiting for the next technology, will cost lives. That too, I find unacceptable.

Despite many claims, there is only one technology available for deployment today: Wifi (802.11 pp or ITS-G5). This time-proven and tested technology is not outdated, but is ready to deliver basic road safety services still this year. I do not accept that users have to wait years and taxpayers to pay hundreds of billions of euros for a new network to get access to these services. The same services can be delivered today, without a network and subscription fee, across brands and across borders.

At the same time, I firmly believe Europe should continue to invest in 5G and other technologies, including for transport applications. In fact, the Commission is actively supporting the development of future use cases, and will continue to do so. In particular, it stands ready to work with front-runner Member States in 5G to test the interaction of 5G with Wifi, including through the preparation of a call for this purpose later this year.

Over time, we will add multiple technologies to the mix (hybrid approach). To that effect, the Delegated Regulation contains a detailed review clause that ensures that new, suitable technologies are added to the mix as they become available, based on a diversified communication infrastructure. Stakeholders can submit new technologies and solutions to the Commission at any time. The Regulation refers to LTE-V2X and 5G in several instances and even qualifies them as prime candidates for integration. However, when taking new technologies on board, we will need to make sure that everybody can talk to everybody (interoperability) and that everybody can continue talking to everybody (backwards compatibility) in order to ensure continuity of services. That is the very essence of the ITS Directive and thus also this Delegated Regulation.

It goes without saying that the Commission did not adopt this Delegated Regulation in a vacuum. It builds on a strategy adopted by the Commission on 30 November 2016 and subsequently endorsed by the European Parliament on 13 March 2018. In addition, the Delegated Regulation was prepared together with Member State experts and only made possible by harmonised deployment activities in 16 Member States united in C-ROADS.

The Delegated Regulation would also not have been possible without the support of the automotive industry, which started development of ITS-G5 more than a decade ago and has developed all the vehicle-to-vehicle services. Today the industry is ready to deploy, starting in 2019 with the equipment of the first high-volume model. Similarly, all heavy goods vehicle OEMs are harmonising platooning based on ITS-G5. More OEMs are expected to make announcements as soon as the Delegated Regulation enters into force.

Furthermore, the situation in the US is almost identical. The baseline of the Department of Transport, just as ours, is ITS-G5 (or DSRC as it is called in the US), already deployed by many states and automotive industry today, with larger volumes announced for 2020. They are also open for new technologies, just as we are, but only when they can ensure these alternative technologies are interoperable with each other and ITS-G5. An openness which is embedded in the review clause of the Delegated Regulation, fully expecting the addition of new services and technologies.

Lastly, the C-ROADS platform has already attracted countries outside the Union and even outside Europe. In addition, the legal certainty provided by the Delegated Regulation means Europe will be first to deploy C-ITS on a massive scale. In other words, do we want to take the lead globally, including on automation, strengthen European industry, start saving lives as soon as possible and export our road safety solutions or do we want to wait, be a follower and import solutions from other regions?

The Commission has answered that question on 13 March 2019. Please do contact me to meet and discuss, or ask for more information, should you be in doubt about the direction that we have chosen.

Yours sincerely,



Violeta BULC

Cc: Ministers of Transport of all EU Member States
Members of TRAN Committee of the European Parliament