

OPEN LETTER IN SUPPORT OF A FASTER ROLL OUT OF ALTERNATIVE FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

Attn:

- EP rapporteurs: MEP Ismail Ertug, MEP Barbara Thaler and MEP Dominique Riquet
- Mr Gustaf Molander, Counsellor for Transport Affairs, Swedish Permanent Representation to the EU / Swedish Presidency of the EU
- cc: Mrs Adina-Ioana Vălean , European Commissioner for Transport

European Parliament and Council need to demonstrate strategic leadership, vision and ambition to speed up development of alternative fuel infrastructure in Europe within the TEN-T network, with Safe and Secure Truck Parking Areas (SSTPAs) as key charging hubs.

On the eve of key discussions and vote in the European Parliament, and likely intense negotiations between Parliament and Council, on the European Commission proposal to revise EU rules on the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T), the undersigned industry stakeholders urge the two legislators to demonstrate strategic leadership, vision and ambition. They must ensure compatibility and complementarity between the TEN-T Regulation and the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), and establish ambitious targets which will lead Europe to the green and sustainable future its citizens deserve.

To reach the current CO₂ reduction target of 30% for heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs) by 2030, an EU-wide fleet of at least 230,000 battery electric and 50,000 hydrogen-powered vehicles will have to be in operation by this date. Around 180,000 of these will have to be long haul trucks relying on Megawatt Charging (MCS). This fleet alone will need more than 30,000 publicly accessible charging points by 2030, of which a very large majority must be MCS chargers, and a minimum number of hydrogen refuelling stations. Should the CO₂ reduction targets be increased even further, both the number of vehicles required and the charging/refuelling points necessary to service them will also have to increase. Today, almost no truck-suitable charging points or hydrogen refuelling stations are operational. Hence, the urgent need for ambitious coverage targets, and a challenging timeline, to provide an enabling environment for operators, and to facilitate the achievement of the EU Green Deal objectives.

Safe and Secure Truck Parking Areas (SSTPAs), which are certified according to the EU-Parking Standard, are ideal for the deployment of such chargers since, as principal infrastructure providers, they can monitor occupancy and ensure both the safety of the driver and the security of the truck for overnight charging in a non-discriminatory environment as well as providing the social working conditions drivers need to carry out their duties. In many cases the necessary infrastructures already exist in part, as well as initial expertise, from the provision of connections for refrigerated lorries. This makes SSTPAs certified according to the EU standard particularly fit for this purpose, to serve as resting areas for drivers and charging points for vehicles, whilst at the same time ensuring connectivity.

The united road transport industry stakeholders therefore invite the legislators to:

- commit to infrastructure targets that anticipate and fully support the deployment of these vehicles, including for long-distance transport, and thus give road transport operators the confidence to start investing in alternative technology vehicles and in SSTPAs on the TEN-T and comprehensive networks, as proposed by the European Parliament;
- recognise, promote and support SSTPAs, certified according to the EU Standard, as strategic EU infrastructure hubs where a large part of the alternative fuel infrastructure can be situated, and which will also promote and ensure the well-being and safety of professional drivers;
- provide different options for eventual unit price calculations, depending on grid connection complexity in the given area and on the charging technology installed;
- exempt publicly accessible alternative fuels infrastructure for HDVs from overly stringent technology requirements being negotiated under the AFIR. With the logistics sector being completely B2B driven, mandating it to adopt B2C-targeted minimum requirements such as payment systems, displays or pricing schemes will hinder innovation and not match the needs of the commercial vehicle market;

- recognize the urgent need to rapidly expand existing network capacities and to enable new flexible alternatives to the current, stagnating network expansion. Decentralized battery storage enables the demand-based and secure delivery of charging power and alleviates the stress on the current distribution network infrastructure due to the expected increased electricity demand in the future.

The stakeholders also invite the European Commission to:

- substantially increase the current EU support and funding, such as that provided within CEF-T, to accelerate the development and roll out of a dense network of recharging and refuelling alternative fuel infrastructure for HDVs, including at SSTPAs, in the next 2-3 years.
- support, including financially, educational and promotional campaigns for SSTPAs, as well as for their audit, certification and training of drivers and managers according to the EU standard, and their connection to a central point, in order to reach the greatest number of potential investors and stakeholders and thus increase awareness and the quality of applications for EU co-funding;
- ensure synergies between TEN-T and TEN-E by enabling additional co-funding opportunities for high-capacity charging stations together with on-site renewable energy deployment and, in general, for the deployment of alternative fuel infrastructure for HDVs on SSTPAs.

Bearing in mind the expected needs as well as business investment cycle, the undersigned remind policy decision makers that the capacity of businesses to invest in alternative fuel vehicles largely depends on the availability and adequacy of alternative fuel infrastructure and the financial and tax incentives that will be created at EU and Member State levels, to speed up the green transition and achieve business and policy targets.

Thanking you for considering these proposals. We stand ready to meet and further elaborate on them, and we look forward to receiving your positive response and support for a more sustainable future.

Signatories:

