**The Third Mobility Package should take all forms of transport into account, says the European Economic and Social Committee**

**The new Commission proposal must go further, taking all available forms of transport into account. It should focus on intermodality in freight and passenger transport. In the opinion drafted by Giulia Barbucci and adopted at its October plenary session, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) backs the Third Mobility Package presented by the Commission but advocates a more ambitious project not limited to road transport.**

In May 2018, the European Commission published its third "Europe on the Move" package, its latest contribution to modernising European transport. The package focuses on road transport, in particular motor vehicle transport, and the three major aspects of safety, connectivity and automation, and clean transport.

The EESC supports the Commission's proposal as a further step towards sustainable transport for Europe. However, **Ms Barbucci** said, "We encourage the Commission to look beyond road transport. To effectively develop sustainable and safe transport, all available forms of transport have to be taken into consideration. We need a more ambitious vision, encompassing intermodality between public and private transport as a way of reaching the goals of efficiency, quality of life and safety."

The EESC puts forward the following specific remarks:

## **Adequate funding for infrastructure**

## The Commission's proposals will require a huge economic contribution, primarily from the Member States, to make the necessary adjustments to physical and digital infrastructure (5G). The Committee therefore insists that it is crucial to make sufficient funds available for a prolonged period, with realistic and achievable objectives.

## **Strategic Action Plan on Road Safety**

## The EESC welcomes the Strategic Action Plan on Road Safety the Commission proposes and agrees with the Vision Zero target of zero deaths or serious injuries in road accidents by 2050. The safe system method promoted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) will certainly help achieve this by reducing the number of accidents and minimising injury to passengers and pedestrians. The Committee supports the project to build an automated, connected and safe road network and recommends extending it to cities, where most serious non-fatal accidents occur.

## **Full vehicle automation**

## The Commission's proposal emphasises the importance of developing driverless vehicles and their role in making roads safer. The EESC highlights possible difficulties ensuring maximum safety in a mixed traffic system (human, assisted and automated driving), since full automation is inextricably linked to technological feasibility and infrastructure.

## Full vehicle automation also raises numerous questions of ethics, economics, employment, social acceptance and legal liability. In this respect, the Committee upholds the principle that only humans can, by definition, make "ethical" choices and that machines, however sophisticated, must operate alongside humans and not replace them.

## **Strategic Action Plan on Batteries**

## The EESC supports the proposals for more sustainable transport and the Strategic Action Plan on Batteries, aimed at narrowing the European energy gap and creating a value chain for batteries. However, a range of factors limit the scope of the plan: reliance on non-EU countries for raw materials, the absence of alternative fuels, delays in managing, processing and disposing of used batteries, and the lack of a skilled workforce. It is therefore essential to invest in research and innovation as well as education and training.

## **Transition to electric vehicles**

## Finally, the transition to electric vehicles also means that a large part of the European vehicle fleet will be replaced in just over a decade. Cleaner and safer vehicles should be affordable for everyone – both private individuals and businesses – and the Member States should facilitate the transition with appropriate tax incentives.

## Replacing the current vehicle fleet will also give rise to the problem of disposing of and recycling a large part of the fleet. This should be central to the Commission's circular economy strategies. In particular, civil society should be involved at all stages of the transition process, informing and raising the public's awareness of what the process involves.