

Marco Campomenosi is a member of the Transport Commission (TRAN) of the European Parliament as well as Head of the Lega Delegation in Brussels. For several years, he has been involved in the transport sector, both nationally and internationally. He enthusiastically joined UNASCA in several battles as well. Let us meet him closely.

1) Honourable, can you describe how does the Committee of Transport (TRAN) work, who is it composed of and what kind of decisions are taken by it?

First of all, it is good to remember that the European Parliament does not have the type of legislative power as national parliaments do since, within the European Union, it is a co-legislator alongside with the European Commission and the Council. This implies that the European legislative procedure is generally carried out the following way: a regulation is proposed by the European Commission, discussed by the Parliament and by the Council - which can propose even substantial changes- and approved by these three institutions who seek, through complex negotiation processes, to find convergence on the issue in question.

The Committee of Transport of the Parliament, of which I am a member, is made up of 49 Members coming from the various parliamentary political groups. Identity and Democracy (ID), the group that I belong to which, is represented by five Members of the European Parliament, three of whom are coming from the Lega delegation. It is parliamentary Committee deals with numerous legislative proposals relating to the issue of transport in all areas among EU competence (maritime, aviation, road, and rail); analysing, modifying and accompanying for final adoption the related directive and regulation proposals formulated by the European Commission.

In addition, the TRAN Commission also expresses its position and contributes on other issues, which are not directly within its competence but on which it is important to issue an opinion that underlines their transport dimension. Among the main issues we deal with, there are the European transport networks (TEN-T), passenger rights, market access rules in the sector, transport safety rules, regulation of services, sustainability as well as infrastructure funding programs. The Committee also tackles the issue of tourism with a specific task force, which maintains an orientation and coordination approach with respect to the decisions of the European Commission and the Council, without independently proposing any legislative initiative.

2) At the European level, the extension of the terms of validity of drivers' qualifications has been much appreciated by users, professional and otherwise. What role did you play in this extension?

We were among the political forces that first raised the problem at the European level. In fact, during the difficult weeks of the lockdown, we received multiple reports from road hauliers, who complained about the lack of international recognition of the extensions issued by the Ministry of Transport so that international freight transport was seriously affected and was risking to fall into a stall, moreover aggravated by the extraordinary circumstances we were going through. In fact, during the lockdown, road haulage and other logistics segments confirmed their strategic vocation for the European economy and for maintaining essential services to citizens. Supporting the sector, guaranteeing the extension of expiring certificates at European level -to allow the maintenance of international trade- was immediately our priority.

We immediately put the focus on the situation, proposing simultaneously to extend all the certificates and administrative obligations whose renewal was impossible due to the lockdown. We sent to the Commissioner Valean a detailed letter with our proposals, a signed parliamentary question and, during an extraordinary session of the Transport Committee, I brought the problem to the attention of those present. The result was that in the May plenary session four legislative packages were presented by the European Commission to deal with the crisis. One of them was dedicated to road transport and contained the standards we requested.

3) Given the radical technological transformation we are experiencing, do you believe that the time has come to introduce, through a Directive, a training system that is more suited to contemporary needs? Do you know the EFA Training Matrix?

Yes, I know the “EFA Training Matrix” and I think it’s absolutely trustworthy. Besides, defining an education which can be up to date and able to correspond to drivers’ requests is a real and urgent matter. First of all, I think it’s necessary to tackle the spreading of the huge web-platforms that are offering on-line theoretical courses to get the driving license. Indeed, lessons without interactivity, based only on didactics and with no focus upon a “road education”, are liable to create road users who are unconscious about the dangers related to driving. At the same time, these online courses contribute to destabilize a sector of services that is extremely helpful to the citizens, promoting often an unfair competitiveness that entails also a decrease of labour cost for the workers.

I believe that the education activated thanks to a face-to-face lesson is able to offer a special training, characterised by the achievement of competences, which finds into the so called “practice” an essential but not comprehensive realization. Moreover, having a modern education in driving means also being aware of the most recent technological developments, such as cars with autonomous guide or hybrid energy sources that function in a different and maybe more complex way than classical motor vehicles.

In conclusion, I think that an European directive about this topic should be well-balanced to be effective, but I think also there are the preconditions to create such a directive through a fruitful debate with the entities that are holding courses with know-how and dedication, as UNASCA does.

4) Speaking about pleasure boating, what do you think about the possibility to introduce a minimal European regulation about the driving licenses, identification of units and ship-owners?

I believe that an European regulation on this matter is desirable, but it should keep into consideration the typicality of pleasure boating in order to avoid the risk of a super-regulation which would be contrary to the development of entrepreneurship and the good maintenance of employment. Training and a uniform regulatory framework can be, rather, a pole of attraction/multiplier both for the safety of those who dedicate themselves to pleasure boating, and for the demand made on the industrial sector. Nevertheless, independently from the level of legislative uniformity across the Union, the Italian Government ability of making the best choices for citizens and enterprises at the best time is essential. Unfortunately, this has not happened yet referring to the pleasure-boat field. For example, one need only to reflect on the recent problem involving the nautical charter.

The 70% of nautical charter's demand refers to the Mediterranean Sea, and that grants to the sector a high amount of labour. The Italian Revenue Agency, following the criteria established by the European Commission, is about to launch a new regulation on the imposition of VAT on nautical charter services offered in Italy. The national implementation of these criteria, that are actually suspended within the most part of the Member States due to the COVID-19's crisis, is going to create a lack of competitiveness between Italy and the other European States operating into the Mediterranean. This confirms that during such a difficult period only a strong Government which is aware of our sectors' problems and potentialities could boost nautical industry and the fruition of its products.