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COMMON IRU POSITION ON A COMMUNITY POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN TRANSPORT OF GOODS AND PASSENGERS

Common IRU Position on Sustainable Urban Transport within the European Union.

I. ANALYSIS

- On 11 January 2004, the EU Commission adopted its Communication "Towards a thematic strategy on the urban development" (COM(2004)60). This Communication is the intermediate step in developing the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment, which will provide the policy framework for actions to be taken in this field. As such, the Thematic Strategy is a requirement of the Community's Sixth Environment Action Programme.
- In its Communication the European Commission identified *sustainable urban transport* as a priority issue and therefore set up an Expert Group on Sustainable Urban Transport Plans (SUTP). Through consultation of this Expert Group the Commission has sought to obtain balanced expert advice concerning a potential EC Directive on SUTP implementation in all Member States.
- The Group of Experts, composed of 20 representatives involved in urban transport planning at different levels in 12 EU countries as well as 4 officials of the European Commission (DG Environment and DG TREN), delivered its final report on 17 December 2004 (see www.rupprecht-consult.de).
- The main policy goals to be achieved at EU level in the above mentioned report are:
 - to achieve and develop mobility for both citizens and goods;
 - to safeguard the environment by reducing congestion and rationalise vehicle use;
 - to improve road safety;
 - to improve the quality of services.
- In the report, a series of recommendations were made to the EU Commission which may be summarised as follows:
 - By means of an EU Directive, a framework should be created for a number of supportive actions carried out at EU, Member State, regional and local level to ensure an efficient and effective implementation of sustainable urban transport planning, including financial support, guidance, training and dissemination activities.

- Cooperation between the different policy sectors and different levels of government is requested to tackle transport related problems in an efficient way.
 - Cities above 100000 inhabitants should develop, adopt, implement and regularly revise a sustainable urban transport plan with short, medium and long-term targets. Member States should provide policy frameworks to facilitate this and to evaluate the impact of new infrastructure projects.
 - The use of clean vehicles and alternative fuels should be supported (i.e. less energy consuming, less noisy, less air polluting, less CO₂).
 - Economic growth should be decoupled from transport growth by internalising external costs.
- In the context of drafting a potential Directive on sustainable urban transport planning, the IRU would like to draw the Commission's attention to the following aspects:

1. General observations

- Whereas the private car is a major hindrance to sustainable urban transport, commercial road transport by truck, bus, coach and taxi are key components of efficient transport systems that are the driving force of successful economies. Therefore urban transport planning should not lead to economic or financial restrictions for professional road transport operators.
- Rising consumer expectations and growing demand for personal mobility require efficient logistic and mobility chains and intermodal transport networks, as well as interfaces between modes.
- New technologies are making commercial road transport cleaner and more efficient.
- When making sustainable transport planning obligatory, it is important to ensure that the vast majority of European towns and cities are covered. The 100000 inhabitants' threshold (based on UTP's in France, Italy and the UK) is perhaps a useful trigger but should be kept open for revision downwards. Other criteria such as industrial or tourist activities may be used to determine whether a town or city needs a sustainable transport plan.
- Economic growth is linked to transport growth.
- An interactive policy must be developed for consultations between the road transport industry, other industry stakeholders from the trade and tourism sector, local authorities and their administrations before a decision is taken on any definitive policy which introduces urban transport plans.

2. Particular freight transport observations

- Road transport of goods is a production tool.
- E-commerce is transforming commercial patterns and increasing demand for road transport services.
- Clear definitions of concepts like urban freight transport, commercial and industrial traffic, domestic and industrial waste transport, public/postal services, building site traffic and house removal traffic are requested to facilitate defining measures addressing problems relating to these activities.
- To solve urban delivery problems, issues such as dimensions of the parking facilities, sign-posting, periods for loading and unloading and enforcement have to be looked into.

3. Particular passengers transport observations

- Land use planning aimed at promoting the movement of citizens out of urban areas and a lack of efficient public transport networks connecting urban, suburban and rural areas have greatly contributed to the increase of private car use.
- According to the results of the European Commission's own studies (MuSTT, 2004), collective bus and coach transport is a vital link to tourism and provides the most environmentally friendly mode of transport. However, in many cases, this mode is not preferred because of social or economic drawbacks (e.g. lower flexibility than the private car, longer travelling time than air and high speed rail), but also because of persisting distortions of competition with other transport modes (VAT, mineral oil taxation).
- Collective passenger transport, including by bus, coach, and taxi can ensure a viable safe and environmentally-friendly alternative to the private car. Therefore, their fundamental role should be recognised, including in solving congestion problems. Collective transport services by bus, coach and taxi should be brought as close to the citizen's doorstep as possible, by eliminating distortions of competition between transport modes, by further integrating urban and inter-urban bus and coach services, by encouraging inter-modality and by facilitating interchange, multi-modal ticketing and passenger information prior to and during the journey. A proactive policy framework for a shift from the private car to bus, coach and taxi should be developed in cooperation with the road transport industry and implemented at EU, national, and city level.
- City access taxes for touring coaches and taxis are counterproductive to any measure aimed at solving congestion problems in inner cities. It makes coach tourism and taxi use less attractive and encourages the use of the private car, which is unacceptable.
- Lack of collective passenger transport facilities (coach stations, parking and other facilities for passenger boarding and alighting in tourist cities, etc) and lack of pro-active coach and taxi friendly policies does not contribute to a shift from the private car to bus, coach and taxi. Any charges levied by cities on collective passenger transport must be fair and transparent and should be reinvested to improve cities' road transport facilities (stations, parking etc.).

II. IRU POSITION

Road transport is a production tool and modern societies require efficient road transport and logistics.

The IRU and its members are committed to sustainable development and will support European Commission initiatives on any strategy or urban transport planning if based on the IRU three "I" strategy for sustainable development:

- **Innovation:** develop ever more effective at-source technical measures and operating practices to reduce the environmental impact of road transport, such as innovative coach and taxi friendly city traffic organisation and guiding schemes, vocational training to obtain higher quality services, and upgrading environmental performance of vehicles by higher standards. Best practices of innovative freight delivery and coach and taxi friendly policies and solutions, implemented at city level, should be exchanged and promoted, including at EU level.
- **Incentives:** encourage the fast introduction by transport operators of best available technology, via e.g. *de minimis* State aide, for accelerated purchasing of Euro 4 and 5 vehicles.
- **Infrastructure:** without free-flowing traffic, above measures are useless. Adequate investments in new infrastructure to remove bottlenecks and missing links, plus make fullest use of existing infrastructure are a condition sine qua non. Adequate, safe and

properly enforced delivery areas are essential for urban freight delivery. In addition there is the need for storage locations and multimodal interchanges. As far as passenger transport is concerned, stations, car parks, traffic priorities, amenities for drivers, crossings, shelters and so on are essential to promote collective passenger transport by bus, coach and taxis.
