

Greening Road transport – EU's Objectives and Actions as Defined in the White Paper

Ladies and gentlemen,

One year ago, we adopted a Roadmap to the Single European Transport Area, which presents main challenges ahead for transport and 40 concrete initiatives which will allow us to meet them.

In the roadmap, we put, among other things, a lot of emphasis on decarbonising transport in the long term. Nevertheless, right now, our priority must be to put our economy back on the growth path and make sure jobs are not lost but gained. Transport and road freight can and must make a serious contribution to it.

Let us be clear from the start: Increasing the economic and ecological efficiency of road transport are not contradictory objectives. Quite the opposite, they go very much hand-in-hand.

Take the single market: by removing remaining obstacles to the free provision of freight transport services in the EU, including restrictions to cabotage, we allow optimal management of fleets. This not only improves economic efficiency but by allowing hauliers to reduce empty runs, contributes to ecological efficiency.

Similarly, we need to reduce congestion. Congestion is an utter economic waste. It results in enormous loss of fuel, time and productivity. Many manufacturing processes depend on just-in-time deliveries and free flow transport for efficient production. According to some estimates, congestion costs the EU economy more than 1% of GDP – in other words, more than the EU budget.

Reducing congestion, for example with the introduction of smart road-pricing schemes, will increase economic efficiency. But it will also reduce fuel consumption and emissions. In present oil prices that are forecasted to remain high, it is absolutely essential to be more effective and use less fuel than until now. Those who manage to achieve it are going to be more competitive in the market.

Reducing empty runs and fuel wasted on congested roads in turn will help to reduce the EU's dependence on external supplies of oil, which in 2010 alone cost us some €210 billion a year. Today, Europe spends \$1 billion per day on oil imports from third countries and this is clearly not sustainable, also having a seriously negative effect on our economies, growth and balance of payments.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me now outline in some more detail the initiatives on our policy agenda for the coming years that will help to achieve it, structured along three main axes.

First, we intend to complete the single market for transport by setting up a **Single Transport Area** where all residual physical, administrative or market barriers have been eliminated. For road transport, this means above all removing the remaining restrictions to cabotage, which are responsible for a lot of unnecessary empty runs of trucks. This

should go hand-in-hand with the gradual harmonisation and improved implementation of the rules applicable to road transport, in particular the social legislation.

The other important proposal foreseen already for the next year is the review of the weights and dimensions directive. For a long time, the debate on this file was dominated by the question of the European Modular System (or EMS). There are strong – and sometimes emotional – views on both sides of this debate. Whatever the merits of the argument, the Commission does not believe there would be majority support in the Council or Parliament for a European-wide adoption of EMS. So I should make clear that the Commission does not intend to propose changes to the weights and dimensions directive which would require Member States to allow the use of such trucks on their territory. But we do think that it is right to allow Member States to make their own decision on the appropriateness of longer trucks to their local circumstances – this is fully in line with the spirit of subsidiarity. To some extent this is already clearly possible, but we have asked our legal service to look in detail at the application of the directive to the cross-border movements of EMS combinations between consenting Member States which allow their use on their territory. Given the imprecise wording of the directive as it emerged from compromises in the legislative process, this is not a straightforward exercise, but we are analysing their opinion and expect to inform the European Parliament's Transport Committee and the Council, and then publish our conclusions very shortly.

But there are other aspects of the weights and dimensions directive which do need revision. We intend, in particular, to adapt the legislation to promote more aerodynamic design of trucks and to facilitate the intermodal transport of 45 foot containers.

Europe has world class manufacturers: we wish to give them the chance to create a new generation of economically and ecologically efficient trucks, the "truck of the future". With significant savings in running costs, hauliers not only in Europe but worldwide would have a strong incentive to renew their fleets, opening up potentially huge new business opportunities for European producers. This is particularly important now when Europe needs more jobs and must get back to the growth track in economic output.

The second area of our transport strategy is **innovation**. Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) have the potential to revolutionise every aspect of transport. They will help managing congestion and optimising the use of the infrastructure; facilitate intermodal communication and the coordination of logistic chains; allow real time tracking and tracing of goods; and, last but not least, contribute to increasing road safety. For all these reasons, it is crucial that the ITS applications for road and complementary systems in other modes are deployed in a timely and coordinated manner.

Europe is a global front-runner in road charging, tolling and tachograph utilization. We can facilitate the introduction and roll-out on a global scale of new products such as interoperable on-board units, combining the digital tachograph and tolling with other ITS applications such as the e-call. This in turn may give rise to completely new services and applications, again with a potentially global market. If we do not do it now, we run the risk of losing the front-runner status, leaving the space to be filled by other actors.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We all know that there are many mature and readily available cost-efficient technologies for reducing fuel consumption and emissions in road transport. These include aerodynamic fairing, low-rolling resistance tyres or eco-driving supporting devices. Still,

they are not deployed because individual operators cannot access the necessary financing. This is why we intend to support the deployment of such innovative solutions in road transport.

The third axis of our policy agenda is **infrastructure**. You certainly noticed that the new proposal on TEN-T (trans-European transport networks) is balanced in terms of the relative importance it gives to road compared to other modes.

The proposal for a Connecting Europe Facility allocates a budget of over €30 billion to the transport sector. However, the funding needs of transport infrastructure in Europe are much higher, estimated at over €1.5 trillion for the next 20 years. This is why we need to look for other sources of financing of the necessary investment and where internalisation of external costs would be the right policy option.

Road charging is one of the possibilities increasingly used in Member States. It can promote a more efficient use of the scarce infrastructure capacity and raise revenues for infrastructure maintenance and expansion. At EU level, we must have the right framework to avoid a proliferation of uncoordinated schemes, for instance in electronic tolls.

Let me also raise a topic which is too often left out of discussions on road transport – passenger transport. I am convinced that the potential of bus and coach transport remains underexploited.

Buses and coaches can offer efficient, flexible and low-cost alternatives to other modes – in particular on thinner traffic flows not justifying the provision of high-quality rail or air links. In this respect, they are fully complementary with high-speed trains and aviation. But they also remain a popular transport choice on long-distance and cross-border connections, despite the rise in low-cost air connections.

We should put in place the appropriate legal framework to ensure that all coach services – whether long or short distance – are attractive to the users from a quality and price perspective. The Commission therefore welcomes IRU's campaign on "Smart Move" and any other initiatives undertaken in this area.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A more integrated internal transport market would increase the competitiveness of the EU economy and generate growth. It would also enhance the ecological efficiency of road transport. These are the absolute priorities of the Barroso Commission.

If we wish to preserve what we hold truly valuable in the European model, this needs to be underpinned by a competitive and robust economy. The completion of the internal market is the obvious starting point to build this economy. Optimising transport can contribute to the economic recovery. The strategy announced in the White Paper has been developed around this goal. We welcome any suggestions you might have for further increasing transport efficiency and thereby contributing to our growth agenda.

Thank you very much for your attention.