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EUROPEAN TRANSPORTS POLICY
MEETING WITH
UNICE PRESIDENT, ERNEST-ANTOINE SEILLIÈRE**

EUROPEAN COMPETITIVENESS IS KEY IN TRANSPORT POLICY

In 2001, the Commission adopted a White Paper outlining a 10 year EU transport policy. In 2005, as stipulated in the White Paper, a mid-term review was started to “check whether the precise targets are being attained or whether adjustments need making”.

1. At the time and with hindsight it is understood that the main goals of the 2001 Transport White Paper was:
 - a) To restrict transport growth (specifically on roads) by decoupling (cutting) the link between it and economic growth, and;
 - b) To ensure that the growth of transport services related to freight would be conveyed mainly by non-road modes of transport i.e. rail and waterway (a modal-shift approach).
2. The Commission’s reasoning was based on the premise that points **a)** and **b)** are efficient, *indirect* approaches to tackling the challenges that face modern transport such as: environmental protection, sustainable development, congestion, enlargement etc.
3. UNICE’s position is:
 - that the best approach for tackling environmental challenges is to address directly the negative environmental impacts of transport (through technological innovation, better efficiency in transport through improved logistics and planning, introducing real competition in the modes of transport etc.) as opposed to decoupling/modal shift;
 - that the Commission’s approach **b)** generates interventionist tendencies in transport (e.g. legislative means, additional taxes, subsidies to support uncompetitive modes etc.) and in general interferes with market developments that reflect the needs of users and opportunities for efficient transport.
 - We must come back to the principles of the Lisbon agenda and meet economic and environmental challenges by facilitating the movement of people and goods in a way that is both sustainable and at the same time improving European global competitiveness. This can be achieved through:

- Facilitating sensible transport growth and helping make transport more efficient through promoting the clean development of all modes of transport equally.
 - Identifying the roles that the various modes have to play and, once identified, rapidly doing what can be done to foster, encourage and promote practical solutions.
 - Focusing on efficient logistical systems in and between modes.
 - Making better use and improving the capacity of existing Trans European Networks.
- It is very important that European Transport policy does not continue on the “2001 White Paper” track. We need to focus our energies on making Europe more competitive. Transport policy, however does not, at the present time, match this objective. The reality is that it appears almost anti-competitive.
 - Inter-modality (i.e. through efficient logistical systems making use of all modes) rather than modal shift is the more practical way of pursuing sustainable development and mobility goals, as opposed to current policy.

PARTICULAR COMPETITIVENESS RELATED TRANSPORT ISSUES

General point: the decision by the Council in December to cut European funding of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TENs) is very negative. The TENs are vital in linking Europe (east and west) and significant ‘European’ financing is fundamental in encourage private and national financing. This decision needs to be reassessed and if additional funding is not forthcoming prioritisation of projects must take place.

Maritime: Progress is necessary on market access to port services. Despite the recent defeat, this is an issue which is central to European competitiveness because of the strategic role played by ports in European transport system. The Commission needs to make a constructive pro-active follow up to the recent Parliament rejection.

Road: Traffic congestion is increasing across the EU because of a lack of capacity of infrastructure. Transport also suffers from a lack of realistic planning in dealing with demand. Solving the congestion problems in urban areas needs to figure more in member states transport planning and European thinking. Charging for congestion and/or use of infrastructure cannot constructively help if it is not encompassing all vehicles and modes.

Rail: The TENs (and border crossings in particular) are key to creating a genuine liberalised rail market. Funding must be provided at the European level to encourage their realisation.