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MEETING WITH MR ETIENNE SCHOUPPE, BELGIAN SECRETARY OF STATE FOR MOBILITY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2010

BUSINESSEUROPE'S PRIORITIES IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT 2010-2014

Transport's contribution to the economy

Transport plays a key role in the EU's goal for a dynamic economy and cohesive society. The transport sector directly generates 10% of EU wealth in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) and provides more than ten million jobs.¹ It is also an indispensable pillar of the 30% of EU GDP represented by industry and agriculture and of a proportion of the 70% represented by services.

BUSINESSEUROPE supports more efficient and safe transport and the need for a more sustainable transport policy. These objectives need to be better reconciled with stronger support for European business competitiveness to better enable European companies to respond to the rapid and time-sensitive delivery of goods caused by globalisation and growth in world trade. In addition, European citizens should be guaranteed accessible, safe and secure transport.

The downturn of the economy has already hit the transport sector badly, and will continue to have a considerable knock-on effect for transport-related policies. To find the resources for sustainable transport, it is important to have a stronger commitment from public authorities and the EU to finance the infrastructure, especially to complete the existing unfinished Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) priority projects, and to make better use of tools such as public-private partnerships. It is important to budget for the necessary TEN-T requirements in the next EU Financial Period running from 2014 to 2020.

Achieving a true internal market for transport

The free movement of people and goods are fundamental tenets of the Internal Market of the European Union. Market opening has generally led to more efficiency, improved mobility and lower costs. However, further efforts are needed to complete the internal market for transport.

In the rail sector, the Internal Market is far from being completed. The Commission must continue to push Member States to enforce EU railway laws but further efforts are needed to open up the rail transport market to competition, improve the interoperability and safety of national networks and develop rail transport infrastructure.

¹ Figures taken from http://europa.eu/pol/trans/overview_en.htm



In the maritime sector BUSINESSEUROPE would like to see faster implementation of already agreed EU initiatives. Efforts to open port services to competition and apply competition rules to maritime transport must continue. In order to increase the transport of goods by sea, the role of harbours and the hinterland should be given high priority not least when new infrastructure is being built. It is also important to reduce administrative burdens in the maritime sector, for instance in relation to customs.

European policy has profoundly transformed the air transport industry by creating the conditions for competitiveness and ensuring both quality of service and the highest level of safety. The ultimate goal is to promote worldwide freedom of air services and investment. Progress towards this objective can be achieved either through bilateral or multilateral negotiations, which favour market needs. It is imperative that the regulatory framework promotes and maintains fair competition between airlines of different countries.

The internal market for road is not yet complete, obstructing EU efficiency and environmental objectives. For instance weekend driving bans in some Member States are a significant obstacle to a well functioning internal market, leading to long traffic jams at borders. It is important that all transport modes are treated equally. This is vital to ensure fair competition and therefore charging for external costs should apply to all modes of transport without prejudice, on equal terms for all modes. The present proposal to start charging road transport of goods for external costs could affect the proper development of the European transport market.

Integration of the different modes of transport

The European Commission's Communication on a sustainable future for transport, a preparatory document to the upcoming White Paper on the EU's transport policy, focuses on the integration of the various modes of transport and also on the necessity to guarantee an adequate level of maintenance, upgrading and repair of the large infrastructure network.

BUSINESSEUROPE has consistently supported the principle of co-modality, described in the Commission's mid-term review of the European Commission's 2001 Transport White Paper as the efficient use of different modes on their own and in combination, which will result in an optimal and sustainable utilisation of resources.

In this context, it is important to recognise that the various modes should be seen as complementary to each other. Better exploitation of the network's capacity and of the strengths of each mode could contribute significantly to reducing congestion, emissions, pollution and accidents. In addition, the further development of sustainable and safe transport requires a blend of initiatives to work in combination with each other relating to infrastructure, nodes, transport vehicles and equipment, ICT solutions, network services, and operational and administrative procedures.



Innovation is key for sustainable transport

BUSINESSEUROPE believes that the development of technological solutions and the application of Information and Communication Technologies, including Intelligent Transport Systems, to transport will be essential to tackle transport challenges for sustainable transport and promote growth.

Science and business have come a long way in finding solutions for transport safety, fuel dependency, vehicle emissions and network congestion. Above all, policy-makers need to put in place clear framework conditions for introducing new technologies commercially on the market. This entails setting open standards, ensuring interoperability, defining a clear legal and regulatory framework, increasing R&D expenditures for technologies that are not yet mature for market application, and promoting best practice.

Better Regulation - Avoiding hidden costs in rules and regulations

BUSINESSEUROPE supports the important steps that have been made to reduce administrative burdens and improve legislation. Better quality impact assessments increase understanding the cost-effectiveness of legislative proposals and should be carried out on all initiatives.

BUSINESSEUROPE would like to see a reduction in administrative burdens in the field of transport and logistics. Perfecting the internal market for transport is badly needed. Certain rules and regulations can imply hidden costs for transport and logistics that are often not counterbalanced by benefits and so damage the efficiency of the European economy. Also, at the moment companies using their vehicles across borders face different laws and procedures in each country. This means that companies must be familiar with and observe all different demands prevailing in each country which creates additional work and costs. These trade barriers affect the whole European economy.

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