



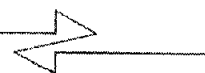
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The aim of the Commission communication is to stimulate general discussion on future EU transport policy.

Slovenia considers that the European Commission has made an important step towards the implementation of not only narrow transport policy objectives but especially of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, which defines the transport field as its second priority. If the European Commission has so far followed the primary transport policy principles (intermodality, co-modality), its most recent communication has integrated sustainability principles into transport policy. Transport is no longer dealt with as an isolated system but as part of a broader understanding of development at national, regional and global levels.

The Commission rightly notes that transport has considerably contributed to strengthening the economic and social pillars in terms of sustainable development and that the biggest progress has been made in these two segments. On the other hand, there has not been the same progress within the environmental pillar, despite some results. The link between economic growth and negative environmental impact has remained continuous. This part, which concerns an important step forward, may be the greatest weakness of the document. The Commission correctly finds that strong growth of global trade and increasingly deep integration in the enlarged EU during the last decade have prevented the dissociation of the growth of freight transport from the GDP growth, since the growth of freight transport is also connected with economic practices -the concentration of production in a smaller number of locations due to the exploitation of the economies of scale, just-in-time delivery, widespread recycling of glass, paper, metals - which have enabled a reduction of costs and perhaps also emissions in other sectors on the account of increased transport emissions. The aforementioned facts mean that important objectives provided in the Commission document cannot be achieved without cooperation and clear programmes in the fields of spatial distribution of activities, modes of production etc. What remains of key importance is the entire field of needs, which is, of course, a highly sensitive area; however, it is difficult to imagine the realisation of objectives in the field of mobility and accessibility without an intervention in the entire segment of needs on a global level.

In this respect, we believe that the economic and financial crisis we are facing is underemphasised and underexploited as a factor of change only mentioned as a matter of current consideration that will not (or should not) have any major consequences or impact. We are, however, of the opinion

that the crisis will certainly essentially impact on future economic development in the EU and globally. Some studies indicate that, e.g., current economic and financial crisis will contribute to a stabilisation or slowing down of globalisation, increase the level of prudence in investments (a more conservative approach) etc. Whatever the result, the crisis we are encountering requires at least a thorough consideration of current economic and financial systems. A variety of discussions are taking place on this subject, and future transport policy should take their findings into consideration.

Slovenia believes that the principle of co-modality should be supported as the first priority of the future EU transport policy. The White Paper on EU Transport Policy, of 2001, stressed a modal shift whose objective was to prioritise (mostly) railway transport at the expense of (mostly) road transport. We believe that no mode of transport should be privileged; instead, the advantages of all modes of transport and their integration must be exploited and developed to the maximum extent. In this sense, the co-modality principle is more appropriate.

Slovenia believes that the actual transport costs (infrastructure, environment pollution...) must be charged to all modes of transport. We expected that this would have already happened in 2008, but the new proposed directive on Eurovignette has again focused only on road freight transport. The charging of actual costs would bring at least two results: on the one hand, we would get a comparison of the costs actually caused by individual modes of transport and, on the other, transport would be rationalised. This would probably make transport more expensive, but its users would become more rational in its use. It is true; however, that the money collected in this manner would have to be redirected back into transport, with the aim of ensuring innovative and alternative modes of transport. Transport must not be used only as a budget-filling source.

Slovenia believes that in the future greater emphasis should be given to the virtual accessibility (or remote presence). Measures for an increased use of remote presence are the foundation for the use of information and the communication technology already available. This will enable an even demographic population and revitalisation of rural areas, which constitutes the basis of the even development level of all EU regions, as well as the most rational use of energy in the future. For the comprehensive development of remote presence, Member States should adopt a comprehensive strategy of selection of measures and methods of their implementation, which should identify all necessary legal bases and create potential financial incentives.

Logistics centres are very important for the development of transport, and also in the provision of even development between and within different EU regions (therefore not only in urban centres and in the most burdened corridors). In this respect, their importance should be supplemented.

In addition, Slovenia notes an accelerated development of different types of clean vehicles (hydrogen, electricity). Their introduction into broader use will in practice require the appropriate modernisation of road and other necessary infrastructure, which involves additional investments. For timely and rational introduction, the EU will have to provide an evaluation of achieved development, which would give industry a clear sign of which technological solutions are acceptable to the EU. We could thus continue by drawing up a strategy of introduction of clean vehicles in practice.

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