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Bundesministerium
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To: **DG Tren**

Subject: **Future of Transport - Contribution of the Austrian Ministry of Transport**

Austria appreciates the recent works concerning the future development of the European Transport System. The communication issued in June is considered to be an important initial document for the new White Paper on transport expected in early 2010. The Austrian Ministry of Transport uses herewith the opportunity of the consultation launched by the commission and submits the following comments, with the request of consideration:

With regard to the European transport policy in the first decade of the 21st century, some of the objectives described in the White Paper 2001 (e. g. liberalisation of railways, further development of transeuropean transport networks) may have been achieved – but still a lot of targets especially as far as sustainability is concerned, remain unreached.

As pointed out in the recent communication *"A sustainable future for transport: Towards an integrated, technology-led and user friendly system"*, the environment remains the main policy area where further improvements are predominantly necessary. The analysis in the communication demonstrates that still a lot of effort has to be taken in order to achieve the objectives of the 2001 White paper and to face the future trends in the sector. However, the instruments suggested in the last section of the communication seem far to vague and don't bring up sufficient actions in order to respond accordingly to the persisting challenges.

From the Austrian point of view it seems indispensable to finally set actions to meet the polluter pays principle and to fully integrate external costs (that is costs arising from congestion, air pollution, noise exposure, accidents and climate change). As stated in the communication, a fair and effective pricing policy is an essential incentive to take the decision to use more environmental friendly modes of transport. The economic crises must not be a reason to abandon this aim.

Measures aiming at improvements in technology and the reduction of emissions are undisputedly necessary, but cannot be considered as the sole solution to the ecological problems, especially in mountainous areas. Since we run the risk to counterbalance the achievements of the single “greener engine” by the overall number of heavy goods vehicles.

In order to protect and develop human capital, i.e. reaching sustainability as far as jobs and working conditions of transport workers are concerned, a lot of actions still need to be taken. The already existing regulations to harmonize working conditions and guarantee minimum standards need to be effectively transposed and controlled in all member states. Future regulations should improve the working conditions on the transport labour market, which still will be subject to substantial changes in the near future. Actions to enhance the participation of the transport workers via information, consultation and social dialogue are necessary to the safeguarding of the jobs in this sector.

The objective to halve the number of casualties in road transport by 2010, included in the 2001 White Paper (aim: 25.000 casualties by 2010), has not yet been achieved and will not be achieved. With still over 39.000 deaths in the EU in 2008, transport by road remains far too costly in terms of human lives. Therefore even more efficient measures still have to be set in all member states in order to lead to significant progress in this field.

Concerning actual trends in infrastructure and modal shift Austria is strongly opposing measures which will have a negative impact on the shift from road to rail or harm the safety of road transport, such as further liberalisation of goods transport by road or changes in weight and dimensions of lorries.

As for the works to bring up a new White Paper about the future of transport and the parallel efforts in the fields of the “sustainable development strategy” (updated report at the European Council in December) aim at the same objectives, coherence and the mutual exchange of the engaged working groups should be assured.

Up to now it seems that in European politics competitiveness, economic growth and employment are taken into account only separately from sustainable development. However, sustainability perceived as the satisfaction of the needs of the society without worsening the possibilities of future generations involves not only environmental but also economic and social measures. Therefore considerable improvements regarding the European transport system may be achieved via sustainable measures respectively sustainability should be set ahead of all political action.

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