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Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and
Communications Sweden

**Open consultation regarding the Commission's
Communication
"A sustainable future for transport: Towards an
integrated, technology-led and user friendly system"
(COM (2009) 279) - Swedish contribution**

General remarks

The Swedish Government welcomes the Communication from the Commission and the launching of a consultation exercise on the main challenges and opportunities for achieving a sustainable future for transport. The EU Transport Policy after 2010 is a Swedish priority during the Swedish EU Presidency. Sweden will devote considerable time and effort to process this very important topic.

The Swedish contribution is a product from internal consultations with a broad range of stakeholders. For example a hearing has been arranged with the participation of stakeholders from the business sector as well as representatives from a number of public authorities. In addition a written consultation procedure has taken place. A SWOT analysis was commissioned by the Swedish Government in 2008. The result of this analysis, which was carried out by Swedish Institute for Transport and Communications Analysis (SIKA), was presented in the spring of 2009, and has also served as a basis for the Swedish contribution.

A future transport policy is envisaged to cover a broad range of sectors and issues. The Swedish contribution is however limited in scope and focused only on a few principles and areas of specific importance and interest that Sweden would like to be addressed in forthcoming White paper on a European Transport policy beyond 2010.

Principles of specific importance and areas of specific interest to be addressed in a White paper - Summary of key points

- Eco-efficient economy

Our society is facing the greatest long-term challenge of all times, namely global climate change. Europe should therefore seize the opportunity of the concept of eco-efficient economy.

The development of the European Transport Policy beyond 2010 (Future of Transport) will be an important part of tackling climate change and contribute to Europe's competitiveness through developing a coherent and efficient future transport system. The transport system today is part of the climate problem, but may also be an important part of the solution.

- One transport system

To meet the challenges we are facing, we need one transport system for Europe where the different transport modes are more closely interlinked.

The European transport system must be coherent and efficient and we must support the introduction and use of new technologies.

There are presently a number of promising initiatives that will contribute to a more efficient transport system, for example the concept of green transport corridors. Smarter solutions are needed e.g. the use of longer vehicles (25,25), as well as more efficient loading techniques and design in order to avoid empty trains/trucks.

- Road Safety

40.000 people are killed in road traffic accidents. All efforts have to be made to reduce this figure. By 2020, this figure should be halved.

Sober driving, use of safety belts, speed limitations in cooperation with technical support and road safety infrastructure investments have to be on the common transport agenda.

- Development and deployment of new technology are key factors

New technology will give new possibilities and will bring about more effective logistics solutions for the transport system. Logistics can benefit from ICT through better route planning, paper-free seem-less electronic flow of information across transport modes, simplifying administrative procedures through developing for example the e-Freight system. Electric and hybrid vehicles, flexifuel vehicles and renewable fuels together with eco-driving are some good examples for greener transports, many of them made possible through different ICT solutions.

- Governance – strong leadership

It is not always new legislation that is the most important in our work. At least as important is ensuring that the legislation that have already been adopted is being implemented and applied effectively.

In some contexts, other measures can be equally, or even more, important than resorting to legislation. Road safety is such an area, where influencing attitudes and opinions are examples of these other measures.

- Dialogue with transport users

The development of a common European transport agenda has to be done in close cooperation with all user of the transport system, including the business sector.

I Trend and challenges

The Communication very well describes the trends in the main transport drivers for decades to come and the related challenges. The latter goes from aging and urbanization to climate change and increasing scarcity of fossil fuels.

It is stated in the Communication that it is difficult to anticipate which of these challenges will have the greatest influence in shaping the future of transport. However, the greatest long-term challenge of all times has to be the global climate changes. The transport system

today is part of the climate problem, but may also be an important part of the solution.

Our society is at the moment facing an unprecedented economic crisis. The big challenge is to learn from this lesson and be prepared to take advantage when growth returns so that European economy is in tune with the demands of competitiveness and the need for the future. The current economic crisis will press for new ideas, and as we have learnt in the past, crises creates opportunities.

Europe should seize the opportunity of the concept of eco-efficient economy. There is no contradiction between economic growth and being careful about the environment. On the contrary the tackling of climate change will provide for good business opportunities and will thus help creating both new jobs and companies in some sectors.

For instance, Sweden has managed to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by nine per cent since 1990. This has been done whilst maintaining a good economic growth rate. The Swedish Government has also stated that the carbon dioxide emissions in Sweden should be cut by 40 per cent by the year 2020. This target relates to the non-trading sector (i.e. activities that are not included in the EU emissions trading scheme). It is the Swedish Government's ambition that by 2030, Sweden should have a vehicle fleet that is independent of fossil fuel.

Another challenge that needs to be highlighted is certain aspects of aging. Europe is facing a change of generation when it comes to the labour force. For the transport sector this is already a reality. The situation is not likely to improve unless the problem is addressed. All efforts should therefore be made to make a career in the transport sector an attractive long-term alternative for young men and women. Part of the solution is to improve the public image of the transport sector, to show the outside world that the sector is in the forefront when it comes to new technology and climate solution. As the technical development is getting more and more advanced and the legal framework has become more complex, skilled transport workers are needed and will be needed in the future. Education and training need therefore also to be highlighted. In this respect the importance of good working conditions and a modern work organization should not be overlooked.

II Specific comments on the suggested policy fields for possible intervention

i Infrastructure

One transport system

By tradition, infrastructure planning has been dealt with at national level. This may have led to sub optimising of national resources, lack of cross-border links, and to some extent not enabling development of the most efficient transport solutions and infrastructure networks on regional and European level.

To meet the challenges we need to create one transport system for Europe where the different transport modes are more closely interlinked. An efficient European transport system requires a coherent approach. We also need to make sure to fully integrate the transport sector into the internal market.

The consequence of the lack of a more holistic approach could mean that we are running the risk of nobody taking the responsibility for the "blind spots", which would be detrimental to the efficiency of the transport system and ultimately growth and development. The inability to deal with territorial blind spots caused by national boundaries need to be addressed swiftly. There is a potential in closer cooperation in the planning of transport investments, where cooperation on EU-level can create a clear added value. The solutions can be trans-European as well as bilateral or multilateral. The important thing however is that we have a clear holistic approach in order to make the most of the potential in the transport system.

A valuable opportunity to address these problem areas would be the present revision of the TEN-T guidelines.

Cross-border transnational platforms could facilitate identification of such gaps and at the same time create acceptance among the countries concerned to plan and fund measures with the intention of creating an integrated European transport system. The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region could be seen as an example of such a platform.

A coherent transport system must also be based on harmonised rules which promote competition on equal terms between different modes

of transport as well as between different parts of Europe. One example of the latter is the need to have the same requirement for the level of sulphur oxide in fuel used in seaborne transport in all European waters.

When formulating the European vision of a common integrated transport system one has to bear in mind that the geographical situation in Europe is very varied. We have densely populated areas where congestion is a everyday problem. On the other hand there are areas where you can drive for miles without meeting other cars or lorries.

Green Corridors

EU has a task in creating an integrated European network both for passenger and freight traffic within the framework of TEN-T.

The concept of green transport corridors is in this context a very important initiative as an essential component of a greener transport policy. Within the framework of TEN-T special green corridors should be designated. Within these corridors, several modes of transport should be represented in order to offer the choice of environmentally friendly and climate smart transports.

Such green corridors could be very useful for benchmarking of logistics systems and could also serve as test beds for new technology and a range of combinations of road networks, railway systems and motorways of the sea. Europe needs to join forces to further elaborate on this concept.

Sweden could contribute to this process through the work of a forum, the Swedish Logistics Forum, which has been established on the initiative of Swedish Minister for Communications, Ms Åsa Torstensson. It is a forum where industry, researchers and politicians meet and together deal with common challenges. The forum has taken an initiative to facilitate Green Corridors with the following objectives; to demonstrate efficient transport solutions by joining forces, to promote the development of Green Corridors in EU transport policy, and to establish international partnerships that can lead to Green Corridors to and from the Nordic region. A search for partners for realisation of the first geographic corridor – north/south or east/west, is on-going.

Transport and the environmental challenge

It is a need for the transport sector to contribute to the "triple 20" deal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent by 2020 compared with 1990 levels, cutting energy consumption by 20 per cent by the same deadline, and ensuring that 20 per cent of the EU's energy mix comes from renewables.

However, the "triple 20 deal" should be considered as a first step. In a longer term, all sectors of the economy, including the transport sector, will need to contribute to more ambitious emission reduction targets, consistent with limiting the global average temperature increase to not more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels, as agreed by G8 and Major Economies Forum. The transport sector's dependence of fossil fuels has to be broken, and its negative impact on the climate drastically reduced.

In order to come to terms with these challenges we need to be creative and find innovative solutions. The public sector, with the support of the EU level, can stimulate this in various ways, for instance through public procurement of transport services, and environmentally friendly vehicles. In 2008, 93 per cent of cars procured by Swedish public authorities were eco cars. The public sector can also support the development of clean energy infrastructure, and encourage change in how the users of the transport system behave through for instance the promotion of eco-driving.

The Environment Technologies Action Plan (ETAP), or similar initiatives, has an important role to improve the contribution to the objectives of promoting and stimulating the market for clean and energy-efficient technologies and to the environment, climate and energy policies of the Community.

Two initiatives and projects in Sweden could serve as an illustration how the transport system can contribute by creative thinking; KNEG (Climate Neutral Freight Transportation) and ETT ("one stack more").

Within the framework of KNEG a large number of companies, researchers, organisations and public authorities have joined forces to work towards a shared goal, namely to reduce the climate impact of goods transport on Swedish roads. The network started its activities at the end of 2006. An analysis showed that it is perfectly feasible to halve emissions from the typical Swedish long-haul transport operation by 2020 compared with 2005.

The members of the network have therefore decided on individual projects all aiming towards the same result to reduce the carbon dioxide emission with 50 per cent. Today KNEG has 15 members and they are looking for European partners to "export" the concept.

In the ETT project revolutionary haulage rig is tested. The rig is 30 meter in length and has a gross vehicle weight of 90 tonnes. On two round trips, the volume of round wood that this rig can haul is equivalent to that carried out by three conventional haulage rigs. The field test in north of Sweden started in January 2009 and after six months the figures showed that the carbon dioxide reduction was more than 20 per cent.

A more efficient transport system

Accessibility to all corners of Europe and to the rest of the world is crucial in order to make Europe more competitive, not least as regards transportation of European raw materials, in the case of Sweden iron ore and forestry products. To create prosperity and growth in the European economy it is important that our natural resources are seen as a value added for the whole of Europe.

To access our markets we need an efficient and coherent transport system. Every mean to improve the efficiency and sustainability of transport in general, and freight in particular, should be looked into. There are presently a number of promising initiatives that will contribute to a more efficient transport. We have for instance the concept of a European maritime transport space without barriers, and the process of creating functional airspace block.

However, there is a number of issues that has to be tackled in order to use the full potential of the transport system, and thereby decrease the sector's negative impact on the climate. The issue of the great number of empty freight trains that are filling the tracks or the increased number of lorries blocking the motorways need for example to be addressed. Smarter solutions are needed, for example longer vehicles (25,25), i.e. the European Modular System, which is advocated by Sweden, as well as more efficient loading techniques and design in order to avoid empty trains/trucks.

The effects of legislation in this respect also need to be looked into. For example the regulations on cabotage. It is estimated that the emissions increase by 30 per cent due to the inefficient use of the

lorries on the roads. The political level has a role to play to speed up the process and to facilitate work done by the industry.

There is a good tradition within the EU of systematic follow-ups of projects. The EU could develop this area further by working with key ratios and indicators to steer development in the right direction. For example, indicators for load factors for freight traffic and emissions per inhabitant can support a development towards more efficient transport systems.

ii Funding and pricing

A well-designed pricing policy is an important part of the puzzle to achieve efficient long-term sustainable transport system. The internalisation of the external effects should be based on marginal cost pricing. Correct pricing is a prerequisite for decentralised decision-making, i.e. the purchaser of transport is best suited to determine how the transport is to take place. The EU has a responsibility for the systemic effects in the design of financial instruments in future freight corridors and TEN-T being taken into account.

iii Technology

Information and communication technology (ICT) plays an important role in enabling the transport system to become more efficient. This role should be even more predominating. Logistics can benefit from ICT through better route planning, which reduces the number of vehicle-km and through a paper-free, seem-less electronic flow of information across transport modes. Simplifying administrative procedures, through developing the e-Freight system, including a digital waybill, will definitively contribute towards making freight transport more efficient. Eco-driving is a good example, where driving habits and new technology can help reduce fuel consumption with at least 10 per cent and some times even 20 per cent. And that can be used in all transport modes.

Difficult times have always been powerful engines of innovation in all sectors. New business opportunities will be created. Policy makers and industry should work hand-in hand to find solutions and standards that not only will give a competitive edge to the European industry but also solve many of the problems that need to be tackled, not least climate change. Bio-fuels, clean diesels, fuel cells, electric vehicles and various hybrid technologies will play ever greater roles in the near future. Of course electricity provides the most durable, affordable, and

practical way of reducing the transport sector's energy use and dependence on oil, while reducing greenhouse gases.

A successful introduction of electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids will require further efforts in the development of an easy accessible and consumer friendly charging infrastructure, e.g. through standardisation and demonstration projects.

Many European cities have introduced so called green zones in order to improve air quality and the quality of life in inner cities. The Commission should analyse and consider the need for further action at EU-level, e.g. from an Internet guide showing the existence and rules of different green zones to harmonised access rules.

Mindful of the fact that development and deployment of new technologies are key factors in the process towards a sustainable transport system, one has to be prepared to have a "plan B" if development of new technologies fail to materialize.

Research and innovation are indispensable tools in creating the future transport system. This should, to a greater extent, be based on research findings. Policy development, research and innovation should be closely interlinked; research gives knowledge - knowledge feeds innovation - innovation make change (and improvement) possible - improvement and change are the essence of policy - policy can be improved by research.

We need research and innovation in all parts and on many aspects of the transport system. Research on specific technologies has to be supplemented with a more systemic and holistic approach, where all the different parts of the transport system are treated on the supply side as well as substantial efforts to gather knowledge about the demand side, from citizens, passengers and customers.

iv Legislative framework

The desired effects of policies and new pieces of legislation can never be achieved unless conventions are ratified, rules and regulations are implemented, and effective enforcement mechanisms are in place.

It is not always new legislation that is the most important in our work. At least as important is ensuring that the legislation that have already been adopted is being implemented and applied effectively. Even though there are many good initiatives that are important for further progress, the implementation process is in many instances too slow,

detrimental to a well functioning internal market. One example is the legislative initiatives in the railway sector. The Commission, together with the Member States, has a major and important role in this.

v Behaviour

Almost 40.000 people are killed in the road traffic accidents in EU every year. We have a long way to go before we achieve the goal of 27.000 which has been set for the year 2010. In order to reduce the number of accidents on roads, we have to focus on areas that we know from experiences gives good results; better speed adaptation, increased sober driving and the use of safety belts.

Road safety is an area, where influencing attitudes and opinions are examples of measures that are equally or even more, important than resorting to legislation. The importance of the right attitude in traffic to better road safety cannot be stressed enough. Effective influence requires cooperation between many actors and everyone has an important role to play. Exchanges of best practices on European level are beneficial in this context.

In this context it can also be of interest to highlight congestion charging as a tool. It is a ITS based tool for improved traffic management. Congestion charging is used in Stockholm to reduce congestion and environmental effects. The scheme also encourages an increased use of public transport, walking and cycling, and brings about changes in departure times. Revenues are used to finance infrastructure and ITS-installations. All in order to improve the use of the transport system for the benefit of the passengers and the freight operators. Traffic in the congestion zone has decreased by about 20 per cent, and travel times have also decreased significantly. At the same time carbon dioxide emissions have been reduced by more than 10 per cent.

vi Coordinated action

A multimodal transport system is also about putting the user in focus. Travellers are interested in the most efficient way of getting from A to B, independent of transport mode. This can be facilitated by synchronizing timetables, a coherent ticket system, convenient changes, effective transshipments or distinct traffic information. When designing the transport system we must also bear in mind that all groups of passengers have their own needs, travel patterns and expectations on the transport system.

The development of a common European transport agenda has to be done in close cooperation with the user of the transport system, including the business sector.

It is important therefore that the dialogue with stakeholders – all users of the transport system - continues beyond the consultation launched by the Commission.

References

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