

Communication on a sustainable future for transport



SCOTLAND EUROPA CONSULTATION RESPONSE | 24 SEPTEMBER 2009

This response is based on discussion with a number of Scotland Europa members including: Caledonian Maritime Assets, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, East of Scotland European Consortium, Scottish Enterprise, and Transport Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University.

Introduction: new thinking, new solutions

Scotland Europa is delighted to contribute to the public consultation on the Communication on a sustainable future for transport.

Scotland aims to become a leading nation in developing a sustainable way of life, reducing the impact its people have on the local and global environment. To achieve this, Scotland has introduced the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to cut emissions by 42 per cent by 2020. By 2020, all public sector vehicles will need to be low carbon. Due to this Act it is believed that Scotland now has most ambitious renewable energy targets in the world.

This binding target is already driving new thinking, new solutions and new technologies putting Scotland at the forefront of building a sustainable low carbon economy. International shipping and aviation are already included in this Act, which makes Scotland the first country to include these modes of transport as legislative targets.

Scotland is home to a number of businesses keen to develop new technologies and solutions to help meet our climate change targets. Particular strengths include: Intelligent Transport Systems; renewable technologies; software engineering; power electronics; niche vehicles and high value manufacturing.

Overall Scotland Europa members are highly supportive of the content of the 'Communication on a sustainable future for transport: towards and integrated, technology-led and user friendly system' and are comfortable that the paper discusses the main trends, ambitions and future transport solutions based on current thinking and knowledge.

Infrastructure

- The move to sustainable transport will require investment a number of areas. We would like to see prioritisation given to infrastructure which can bring modal shift, supporting sustainable economic growth. High speed rail is one example of this – it can encourage modal shift from aviation as well as reducing journey times between economic centres. A good example of this is the high-speed rail line between Cologne and Frankfurt, which led to the regional air routes being scrapped. In Scotland this would also need to be complimented by investment in and optimisation of inter-city rail networks which is an issue similar across the EU and should be acknowledged in policy development. In addition, we feel that the practice of cold-ironing (supply-side electricity) in ports should be rolled out across the EU.
- Scotland is undertaking work to ensure that where there is potential to integrate different modes of freight into a multi-modal freight location, this opportunity is exploited. In addition, where it makes environmental sense, we are keen to see inter-modal gateways established in order to make more efficient use of freight movement.
- The EU needs to continue to support the balanced spatial development of European transport corridors. It has a role to play in providing counterweight for the fact that the market naturally gravitates towards large cities. Continued data analysis at EU level of the transport market is needed to ensure this happens throughout the length of a Programming period. For instance, studies of the TEN-T 1994-1999 Programme which produced maps representing geographical space through journey times of high speed

rail, suggest that the outlying regions of Europe became increasingly peripheralised as a result of the core converging (Vickerman, Spiekermann, and Wegener: 1999).

- We wish to highlight the special circumstances of remote peripheral and island regions of the EU where investment in transport is considerably less competitive. Scotland is undertaking interesting work on joint procurement with Ireland and Northern Ireland for the next generation of small ferries which will utilise low carbon technologies and alternative fuels (including LNG, hybrid and fuel cells) and will ensure these economically fragile remote island areas can contribute and play a part in the region's economic development (www.smallferriesproject.com). This project will look at innovative financing options (e.g. procurement and standardised design of vessels for the next 30 years where fossil fuels are likely to be more expensive to run) for replacing aging stock but this is clearly a wider discussion the EU needs to develop urgently as this is a common issue.
- We feel that the EU should continue to prioritise supporting joint actions which facilitate regions and organisations with similar needs and interests collaborating on projects.
- In addition to large scale investment we feel that softer measures such as integrated ticketing can go a long way to integrating different modes. In addition, Intelligent Transport Systems are another side of the "softer" investment which are important to prioritise in order to maximise existing transport infrastructure.

Funding & Pricing

- Scottish companies have a desire to adapt to a more sustainable transport future, partly in response to the emissions targets set by the Scottish Climate Change Act. However, the challenge is to link this desire to the overall finance needed to adapt for future requirements which remains a significant gap to fill and the market cannot address this without public sector support. According to a recent study in Scotland, 'Sustainable Transport Strategic Options Study' (Optimat, June 2009), emerging sustainable transport products can cost up to 50% more than non sustainable options. This suggests there is a massive need for market intervention in this field.
- The rights of the passenger need to be considered in terms of costs incurred in the drive for sustainability which should not to be wholly passed on to passengers. If usage of sustainable transport is significantly more expensive it will not lead to uptake or behavioural change. Governments need to ensure a balance between a focus on behavioural change, ensuring they have public support for schemes; and providing incentives to stimulate investments.
- There needs to be a level playing field in terms of funding for all transport modes and consideration of balance of support given to passenger and freight options too. Prioritisation should be given to options that move users of the road to other modes of transport.

Technology

- Continued support must be given to research establishments to make advancement in Research & Development of technology.
- Likewise, continued support must be given to public bodies to make use of technology in their own activities which brings benefits in itself and also supports the market whilst setting an example. This is important in current economic climate. It is vital that support is given to ensure that sustainable activities remain a priority.
- Technology in the field of sustainable transport must be linked to advances in renewable energy. We would welcome a policy framework that links intermediate renewable technologies with sustainable vehicle transport infrastructure. Intelligent Transport Systems and Smart Grids is one area where this can be developed; where smart grids

can make use of electricity generated from renewable sources the benefits are much greater than using conventional sources.

- The role of the EU in this area is to facilitate knowledge exchange and transnational support for joint working, whilst respecting the principal of subsidiarity. We would caution against any approach that end up too prescriptive and could stifle innovation and might not take account of regional differences.

Legislative framework

- We are wholly supportive of the EU framework for a sustainable transport future. However, the policy focus should be on areas where the EU value-added can be demonstrated and where the principals of subsidiarity and proportionality can applied.
- How we allocate transport expenditure needs to change, as health impacts and environmental impacts remain undervalued in transport appraisal. One solution could be to consider that all new strategic infrastructures funded by EU funds should undergo a carbon assessment. However, we acknowledge that establishing an appropriate cost effective and robust assessment and measurement tool for this might be quite difficult.

Behaviour

- A “one-size fits all” approach is impossible in considering a push towards sustainable transport which is why we need a modal mix in order to give individuals and territories a choice of options. Limiting this choice will not lead to behavioural change. It is felt that whilst behavioural change is an important aspect of transport policy it needs to be counter balanced with a focus on transport solutions to support individual choices. Transport solutions need to be made attractive and not restrictive by taking away the barriers to using them.
- Further exploitation of technology which allows for less travel is needed. WebEx and video conferencing technologies of the future as such examples.
- Developments should be encouraged which make the most of current capacity on our network. For example, Intelligent Transport Systems can be used to ensure that the current network is used more efficiently, leading to less need for extra capacity/infrastructure to be developed.

Coordinated action

- Due to the size of markets much activity in this area takes place in the bigger cities (e.g. in UK much of the activity is concentrated in London). It is important that the benefits are allowed to be felt throughout Member States and thus cognisance should be taken of smaller urban; urban-rural interconnections; and remote rural-island approaches in the field of sustainable transport. There is a role for the EU in insuring this balanced spatial development. The biggest barrier to ensuring adoption the existing transport legislation is the lack of coordination. By this we mean, coordination of various levels of legislation; within layers of Government; coordination of the transport supply-chain; and coordination of Government subsidies, funding, and responsibilities. This lack of coordination is partly attributable for the continued market failure of sustainable transport across the EU. We need structures across the EU for multi-level governance in transport planning to coordinate activities within governments and between transport actors.
- We watch with interest the development of the Baltic Sea Strategy and its potential transport scope. We would like to see such an integrated macro-regional approach adopted in the North Sea to address and coordinate some of our transport challenges.

The external dimension

- We do not have a great deal to say on extra-EU affairs, though would be keen to see the improvement of TEN-T links to global gateways (e.g. Rotterdam) within the EU. In Scotland the recent reinstatement of the Rosyth-Zeebrugge link is a first positive step towards this. However, most freight coming to Scotland remains intercepted in England.