



Public Affairs Department
Permanent Delegation to the European Union

Response to DG TREN's consultation on the Future of Transports

Since the company was founded, Michelin's stated mission has been to contribute to progress in the area of person and goods sustainable mobility and, beyond this, the development of society.

Therefore Michelin welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to propose a new agenda for the European transport policy post-2010.

Michelin participated in the conference on the "Future of Transports" in March 2009 and is pleased to contribute to the consultation launched by DG TREN.

Transport and mobility

Free Mobility is the basis of the European integration. Sustainable and effective transports are and will remain a major contribution to the economic development of the European Union, being one of the keys to its competitiveness. Thus the European Commission has to adjust the future policies which will be developed after 2010 on transport issues to allow a sustainable development. In order to achieve this, a pragmatic transport policy has to be set up. This policy should put citizens and mobility at the heart of its concerns by taking into account lifestyle changes.

As regards sustainable development, the Commission must pursue its socio-economic objectives of growth while continuing to reduce the negative impact of the effects that transport can have on the European society. Indeed transport and mobility are often accused to be responsible for environmental problems, loss of quality of life and sources of harm for European citizens. Political decisions like new taxes and restrictions on transport go in the direction of reducing this impact (like the Eurovignette directive). However it is essential that the Commission systematically recalls and highlights that transport is at the basis of virtually all economic activity and as such has to be helped, especially the road sector.

Road transportation continues to grow in prevalence among the various modes of transport. Its performance in terms of speed, flexibility and cost, makes it the best solution for individual and professional needs. Road transport is currently developing in a context of population growth, urban development and an increasing awareness of the impact of human activity on the environment. In light of these factors, a transition towards a new attitude to mobility is clearly needed: sustainable mobility. Sustainable mobility must first of

all provide a satisfactory response to travel requirements. But it must also move towards a reduction in the impact of mobility on the environment, become accessible to the majority in complete safety and be compatible with the economic objectives and constraints of all players, particularly public authorities and private companies.

The following initiatives respond to these challenges.

Co-modality

Michelin supports progress made over the last few years for the development of co-modality which can offer an economically viable solution to problems of congestion and environment, providing the substitution modes of transport are clean, efficient and affordable.

The growth of co-modality can only be accomplished thanks to investments in infrastructures made for rail, inland waterways and roads. All modes of transport must be inter-connected without any technology break in order to obtain optimizations related to tracing of goods and the supply chain.

The future transport policies should thus be built in a constructive manner from decision makers in order to develop the effectiveness and the competitiveness of all modes of transport. Each mode has to be integrated according to its own advantages and must be articulated with the other modes for the greatest benefit of the users.

European policies in favour of co-modality should ensure a level playing field among the different transport modes, and the aim of such policy decisions should always be to have a more efficient, cleaner and cheaper transport.

Logistics and longer vehicles

To reduce problems of congestion and fuel consumption, the Commission should introduce commercial vehicles of 25,25 meters called EMS (Euro Modular System). Those vehicles which are in use in Scandinavia since the sixties and have been tested or are currently being tested in the Netherlands, in some German Länder, in Denmark and in Belgium, offer multiple advantages. First of all the replacement of three "maxi-code" trucks (18,75 meters) by two EMS would allow a reduction in the number of trucks. Therefore it will reduce the congestion of the main road axes. Secondly a reduction of around 15% of fuel consumption (by ton or cubic meter transported) would be effective as well as a parallel reduction of the CO2 emissions. Lastly up to 50% more volume or mass could be transported by a tractor and a driver which would mean a reduction in transport costs on long distances. This mode of transport is totally compatible with the transport of containers and the development of the rail (rail freight increased in Nordic countries even during the period of EMS testing) and enters entirely in the logic of co-modality described above. Of course those vehicles should only run on special routes such as long distance motorways.

Infrastructures and road safety

The European Union should consider how important investments in infrastructures are.

In the same direction, the efforts the Commission made regarding road safety have to be increased and be particularly focused on the protection of individuals and the most vulnerable users (children, teenagers, young adults using two-wheeled vehicles – motorized or not). Michelin has always contributed to this commitment: signature of the European road safety Charter¹ (trainings, actions towards general public...), promotion of safety rules directly linked to tyres. In particular Michelin made an important safety contribution in lowering rolling resistance without compromising adherence, in placing on the market the innovative anti splash tyres on trucks, in pushing our commitment in favour of TPMS – Tyre Pressure Monitoring System - , in wet grip² and actions encouraging the right pressure of tyres. We will continue to move in this direction in the future. The renewal this year of our commitment for the European road safety Charter is a first example.

The potential of technology

We are convinced that innovation can bring real solutions for the harmful effects caused by road transport. Enormous progress was made by the stakeholders of the sector and others will still come. On our part, we permanently seek to improve the technical performances of our products in order to offer increasingly safer tyres which are more respectful of environment. This means that we improve adherence of our tyres, noise emissions, rolling resistance thus fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and we are improving wear resistance in order to reduce waste.

In addition the measures proposed by the European Commission in its action plan ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) which deals with the management of traffic bring real solutions to problems of congestion and safety. Michelin is working on that way through our subsidiary ViaMichelin. We offer services allowing optimisation of voyages to the general public as well as to transport professionals³.

The evolution of road transport also urges us to find solutions consuming less energy and better adapted to the increasing urbanization of lifestyles. Thus Michelin supports the development of electric vehicles (hybrid or pure electric) and is eager to see this issue emerge in the near future. Our Active Wheel solution presented to the 2008 Motor Show integrates into the wheel in addition to the engine and the tyre the functions of braking and suspension. This proves our commitment on this issue. This approach revolutionizes the concept of the electric vehicle by freeing it from the technical heritage of the thermal vehicle.

Finally our Michelin Fleet Solutions system proposes professional fleets to ensure the complete management of their tyres. Our customers now buy kilometres instead tyres, and benefit from the support of technicians with dedicated means. Choices for the best adapted tyres, regrooving, retreading, follow-up of maintenance by professionals allow the technical potential of the products to be translated into profits of mobility and productivity. This offer also integrates the services of Michelin Euro Assist ensuring fast and effective breakdown services in all Europe.

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¹ Michelin was one of the first signatory of the European road safety Charter (2004)

² Commitment materialized by the Michelin support to the regulation « type-approval requirements for the general safety of motor vehicles »

³ Determination of itineraries according to criteria chosen. Information on traffic in France and in the United Kingdom