Freight transport in Europe

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The present **Freight Logistics Action Plan** is one of a series of policy initiatives jointly launched by the European Commission to improve the efficiency and sustainability of freight transport in Europe. It presents a number of short- to medium-term actions that will help Europe address its current and future challenges and ensure a competitive and sustainable freight transport system in Europe. The external dimension of all of these actions will need to be considered with a view to efficiently integrating third countries and in particular neighbouring countries into the logistic chain.

The actions outlined are designed to help the freight transport logistics industry achieve long-term efficiency and growth by addressing issues such as congestion, pollution and noise, CO_2 emissions and dependence on fossil fuels that – if left unchecked – would threaten its efficiency. These actions need to be accompanied by work on a long-term perspective, undertaken jointly with the Member States, in order to establish a common basis for investment in tomorrow's freight transport systems.

The Commission suggests, amongst others, the following measures:

- Developing a roadmap for the implementation of e-freight, expanding on the concept of the “Internet for cargo”;
- Making a proposal on “e-maritime”;
- Working towards a standard for information flows;
- Establishing a framework for the development of ITS applications which also addresses freight transport logistics (including monitoring dangerous goods and the transport of live animals, tracking and tracing, and digital maps);
- Accelerating work towards interoperability in Electronic Fee Collection;
- Continuing the freight transport logistics bottleneck exercise;
- Drawing up a list of minimum qualifications and training requirements at different levels of specialisation to be incorporated into a framework that can ensure the mutual recognition of training certificates;
- Launching a dialogue with the European social partners to find ways to improve the attractiveness of transport logistics professions;
- Elaborating, together with industry, a set of generic (dynamic and static) benchmarks for terminals;
- Establishing a network between logistics institutes and promoting industry initiatives to exchange experience and disseminate best practice;
- Establishing a single window (single access point) and a one-stop shop for administrative procedures in all modes;
- Making a legislative proposal on simplifying and facilitating short sea shipping towards a maritime transport space without barriers;
- Examining the details and added value of establishing a single transport document for all carriage of goods, irrespective of mode;
- Assessing the need for introduction of a standard (fall-back) liability clause within the EU as well as the need for a legal instrument to allow full coverage of the existing international, mode-based liability regimes over the entire multimodal logistics chain;
- Simplifying port access requirements;
- Studying the options for a modification of the standards for vehicle weights and dimensions and considering the added value of updating Directive 96/53/EC;
- Defining green transport corridors, developing a freight-oriented rail network, promoting the establishment and recognition of Motorways of the Sea and Implementing the NAIADES programme for inland waterway transport;
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- Encouraging the exchange of experiences of representatives of urban areas to help establish a set of recommendations, best practice, indicators or standards for urban transport logistics.

The European Commission will report on progress made in the implementation of the Action Plan in 2010. This report will also provide the opportunity to determine what further actions will be required in the areas outlined above and to evolve EU freight transport logistics policy in line with the economic context and technological developments.