Sustainable European transport policy, taking into account European energy and environment policies

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The European Parliament adopted, by 542 votes to 79 with 26 abstentions, a resolution on sustainable European transport policy, taking into account European energy and environment policies.

The own-initiative report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Gabriele **ALBERTINI** (EPP-ED, IT) on behalf of the Committee on Transport and Tourism.

The resolution points to the importance of the transport sector for employment, growth, and innovation, and considers safe and affordable guaranteed mobility to be a sine qua non of our lifestyle.

To achieve the aim of making European transport sustainable in energy and environmental terms, Parliament considers it necessary to combine different policies with the involvement of more and more stakeholders representing the transport sector, government, and citizens. This combination of measures should encompass the following in particular:

(a) technological developments (measures to increase energy efficiency; new standards for engines and fuels; use of new technologies and alternative fuels);

(b) market-based instruments (charges/fares based on environmental impact or congestion, tax incentives, Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) allowing for the specific features of the different modes of transport); and

(c) flanking measures to enable means of transport and infrastructure to be used as efficiently as possible.

Parliament maintains that the EU and the Member States need to focus their efforts on the key elements of the system, namely congested large cities and urban areas, the main European intercity corridors and environmentally sensitive areas.

The Council and the Member States are called upon to step up their investment in infrastructure and Intelligent Transport Systems (ITSs), in particular with a view to:

(a) completing the trans-European network priority projects as soon as possible;

(b) tackling congestion in urban areas and along corridors in sensitive areas; and

(c) improving intermodal transport.

Parliament urges the Commission to submit by June 2008 at the latest, a comprehensible, transparent, generally applicable model for assessing the external costs of all modes of transport, on which to base future calculation of the charges to be paid for the use of infrastructure.

Urban mobility: according to MEPs, the problem of urban congestion (which causes 40% of CO_2 emissions) needs to be tackled by applying a Europe-wide cooperation and coordination strategy. The report calls on the Commission and the Member States to analyse the way in which transport

infrastructure and the tariffs applied to it influence urban development and future demand for transport services. In this context, Members believe that it is necessary to invest in technological innovation, better exploitation of existing infrastructure (e.g. congestion charges and road pricing) and new ways to optimise the use of private cars such as car-sharing, carpooling and arrangements for working at home.

Rail transport: emphasising that this is the mode of transport which consumes the least energy and produces the lowest level of CO_2 emissions, MEPs call on the Commission, the Member States, and the rail industry to:

(a) complete a single European railway area or rail market as soon as possible;

(b) with that end in view, eliminate the technical obstacles and move towards a single European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) and interoperable solutions; (c) improve freight and passenger transport services and the quality of service.

Civil aviation: although airlines have cut their fuel consumption by 1%-2% per passenger-kilometre in the last 10 years, the overall environmental impact of civil aviation has risen due to the substantial expansion in traffic. Parliament calls for:

(a) air transport to be included in the ETS;

(b) emissions-based differential take-off and landing charges at airports;

(c) the establishment of the'Clean Sky a Joint Technology Initiative' that aims at reducing CO_2 and NO_X emissions and noise pollution;

(d) an end to the fragmentation of European airspace through the creation of a real Single European Sky;

(e) practical steps to relieve airport congestion; and

(f) ensuring better co-modal and logistics integration of airports, facilitating their access to railways.

Shipping: given the fact that emissions from shipping are continuing to increase, Parliament recommends that:

(a) CO_2, SO_2, nitrogen oxide, and other emissions from ships be reduced;

(b) the use of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power be encouraged;

(c) vessels that come to anchor be fuelled from land-based sources;

(d) the use of emission allowance trading to contain emissions be treated as a possibility deserving careful consideration;

(e) an integrated European rivers policy be agreed.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to invest more in research in the field of transport, to enable more energy-efficient and CO_2-emission-reducing technologies to be developed. It calls on the Commission in the 2009 review of the multi-annual financial framework to increase significantly the overall financial effort towards R&D concerning the environment, energy and transport.