Sustainable future for transport

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted an own-initiative report drafted by Mathieu GROSCH (EPP, BE) in response to the Commission communication entitled “A sustainable future for transport: towards an integrated, technology-led and user-friendly system”.

Social, economic and environmental challenges: the committee is convinced that EU policy, in general, needs a clear and coherent vision of the future of transport as a sector at the core of the single market, guaranteeing free movement of persons and goods and ensuring territorial cohesion throughout Europe. It takes the view that the transport sector must guarantee economic efficiency and develop within consistently high social and environmental standards.

Members are convinced that demographic change, in particular in urban areas, will give rise to safety and capacity challenges for transport and mobility, and that the basic right to mobility, as well as the applicability of this right, is crucial in this regard. They stress that, in this context, well-integrated multimodal transport chains including walking and cycling and public transport are the way ahead for urban areas. They ask the Commission to introduce Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) for cities of more than 100 000 inhabitants.

and, with due respect for the principle of subsidiarity, encourage cities to draw up mobility plans which propose an integrated transport concept with the objective of reducing environmental damage and making mobility healthier and more efficient;

The report stresses that decarbonising transport is one of the main challenges of future EU transport policy and that all available, sustainable means should be used in order to achieve this, such as an energy mix promoting the research and development of more environmentally friendly technologies and modes, price formation measures and the internalisation of the external costs of all modes of transport, provided that the revenue generated at EU level is used to improve the sustainability of mobility.

Safety: emphasising that safety must continue to be one of the priority objectives of the future transport policy, Members consider it to be of the utmost importance to reduce the health effects of transport and to ensure the rights of passengers in all transport modes, particularly those with reduced mobility, by means of clear and transparent regulations.

They call on the Commission to present a study detailing the best practices of the Member States concerning the impact of speed limiters for all types of vehicles and roads, with a view to presenting legislative measures aimed at reducing emissions and improving road safety.

The report also underlines the necessity of guaranteeing both personal safety and legal certainty for workers in the transport sector by, among other things, creating a sufficient number of safe and secure parking places and harmonising the enforcement of road transport rules and the sanctions for which they provide.

Efficient comodality: Members consider that European transport policy should have as its main goal efficient comodality, which is closely linked to the decarbonisation, safety and economic aspects of transport. They stress that efficient comodality should be measured not only in terms of cost-effectiveness but also according to criteria of environmental protection, social and employment conditions, and safety and territorial cohesion

Completion of the single market: the committee considers that transport plays an essential role in completing the European single market and freedom of movement for persons and goods, and that regulated market opening should be achieved, primarily in the rail transport sector, in all EU Member States. It calls on the Commission and on Member State authorities to facilitate the completion of the liberalisation of cabotage transport, to reduce the prevalence of empty mileage and to provide for a more sustainable road and rail network in the form of more freight transport hubs.

Members believe it essential, in order to achieve an efficient maritime transport system that complements other modes, to focus once again on a clear liberalisation process enabling it to be truly competitive.

The report underlines the importance of genuinely European management of transport infrastructure with a view to eliminating the 'border effect' in all transport modes and enhancing the EU's competitiveness and appeal. It calls for the establishment of a common European reservation system.

Members call for regular reviews of European legislation and its transposition and implementation, with a view to guaranteeing the effectiveness thereof. They propose that at least one joint meeting be held every year with representatives of the national parliaments responsible for transport, with a view to sharing and cooperating to ensure better, more effective implementation of EU transport legislation.

European agencies: Members are of the view that technical interoperability and its financing, European certification, standardisation and mutual recognition are essential elements of an effectively functioning single market, and that their enforcement should figure more prominently among the tasks of the various agencies. They underline that all the agencies should strive for, and swiftly attain, a similarly high level of responsibility and competence and should be evaluated regularly.

Research and technology: Members call for a research and technology agenda for the transport sector. They consider that priority should be given to projects to decarbonise transport, increase the transparency of the supply chain and transport safety and security, improve traffic management and reduce administrative burdens.

The report underlines that, within the framework of climate protection and EU energy independence, each transport mode should reduce its CO2 emissions and be supported by research and development in innovative, energy-efficient and clean technologies and renewable energies.

Transport fund and a European transport network: the report calls for the current resources for transport and mobility to be increased and considers the following to be necessary:

- the creation of a transport fund endowed with resources over and above those already included in the EU budget;
- a budget commitment for transport policy under the multiannual financial framework;
- the possibility that, in the framework of the Stability and Growth Pact, the long-term nature of investments in transport infrastructure, which improves the competitiveness of the economy, is taken into account when calculating the public deficit;
- the use of the fund to require, among other things, cofinancing from revenue generated by the internalisation of external costs.

Measurable targets for 2020: Members call for compliance with clearer, more measurable targets to be achieved in 2020 with reference to 2010, and therefore proposes the following:

- a 40% reduction in the number of deaths of and serious injuries to active and passive road transport users,
- a 40% increase in the provision of parking areas for heavy goods vehicles in the trans-European road network (TERN) in each Member State;
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- a doubling of the number of bus, tram and rail passengers (and, if relevant, ship passengers) and a 20% increase in funding for pedestrian- and cycle-friendly transport concepts;
- a 20% reduction in CO2 exhaust emissions from road passenger and freight traffic;
- a 20% reduction in the energy used by rail vehicles compared with the 2010 level and capacity and a 40% reduction in diesel use in the rail sector;
- fitting an ERTMS-compatible and interoperable automatic train speed control system to all new railway rolling stock commissioned from 2011 onwards, and to all new and rehabilitated link lines starting in 2011;
- a 30% reduction in CO2 emissions from air transport throughout EU airspace by 2020;
- financial support for the optimisation, development and, where necessary, creation of multimodal connections (platforms) for inland waterway transport, inland ports and rail transport and a 20% increase in the number of such platforms by 2020;
- at least 10% of TEN-T funding to be dedicated to inland waterway projects.