Pricing in transport: towards a fair and efficient pricing in transport. Green paper

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Recalling that the average daily urban mileage for work reasons had increased from 16.5 km to 31.5 km between 1970 and 1993, the rapporteur called for a stepped approach towards improving transport policy: firstly, harmonisation of the basic instruments (vehicle duties, fuel excise duties, infrastructure costs, registration fees and tolls) throughout the Union while taking into account the situation in each country; secondly, once harmonisation was complete, a road charging system could be created. The Commission and Member States should concentrate on harmonising the rates of fuel and vehicle duties in a manner which was compatible with preventing harmful environmental effects. Against this background, Mrs Schmidbauer asked the Commission to take account of CO_2 emissions and their global impact.

Commissioner Kinnock approved the priority given by the rapporteur to internalising the external costs of all modes of transport and, as a result, to establishing real competition between the various methods used. As regards CO_2 emissions, a Commission proposal would be presented shortly to update the Community's minimum excise duty on energy products in order to try and limit emissions in all relevant sectors, including transport. Finally, Mr Kinnock announced a tripartite conference on best environmental practice, to which representatives of industry, transport operators and environmental organisations would be invited.