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

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The Committee on Transport unanimously adopted the report by Mrs Schmidbauer (PSE, D) on the Green Paper on transport planning. While emphasizing that, in accordance with the conclusions of the Green Paper, railways and internal waterways gave rise to far lower external costs than road transport, the rapporteur noted that a coherent transport policy needed to apply the same calculation principles to all modes of transport (road, river, rail and air), stating that, "if internalization of external costs applies unilaterally and solely to road traffic, there is a risk, given the lack of alternatives, of only achieving price increases and not the desired model". Furthermore, this type of policy should give priority to combined transport, which represented a competitive option in the integrated approach to road-rail transport and river-coastal transport. A balanced approach also involved equal conditions of competition for all modes of transport so that each of them bore the external costs to which they gave rise. The committee regretted that the Green Paper contained no provisions for passing on all rail, river and air transport infrastructure costs. Finally, with regard to the harmonization of vehicle taxes, the report adopted proposed that the Commission take account of the following criteria as a basis for calculation: fuel consumption, potential emissions, noise pollution and safety. Provision also needed to be made for special measures for zones in which the environment was more threatened.