Intermodality and intermodal freight transport, services and sustainability

1997/2129(COS) - 29/05/1997 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: to promote intermodality and intermodal freight transport in the European Union by changing the present approach and adopting a systems approach, this being the only way to resolve future transport problems (traffic congestion, accidents, pollution, noise, etc.). SUBSTANCE: in line with the other measures already proposed by the Commission, the measures envisaged in this communication are aimed at eliminating the current barriers to the development of intermodal door-to-door transport and thereby promoting increased use of environmentally-friendly modes of transport with spare capacity. The Commission feels that implementing a European intermodal transport system requires coordinated development of a transport policy at European, national and regional levels. Four key strategies will provide the necessary impetus for the development of intermodal transport in the overall context of the common transport policy: - a European strategy on infrastructure (trans-European transport networks and nodes); - the single transport market: harmonization of regulations and competition rules; - identification and elimination of obstacles and the associated friction costs; - implementing the information society in the transport sector, and particularly computer-aided transport (CAT). The Commission's view is that the key measures in achieving intermodality are found at three levels: 1) infrastructure and means of transport; - intensified intermodal design of trans-European transport networks; - enhanced design and functioning of intermodal transport points; - harmonized standards for transport means and equipment; 2) operations and use of infrastructure (particularly terminals): - integration of freight freeways into an intermodal environment; - development of common charging and pricing principles; - harmonization of competition rules and State aid regimes on an intermodal basis; 3) mode-independent services and regulations: harmonization and standardization of procedures and EDI systems; research and demonstration; benchmarking; intermodal statistics. The Commission has announced its intention of taking the necessary initiatives where regulatory or legal issues are concerned. While respecting the principle of subsidiarity, it will also address areas where intermodality depends on coordination at European level.