Freight transport logistics in Europe, the key to sustainable mobility

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Ines **AYALA SENDER** (PES, ES) in response to the Commission communication on "Freight Transport Logistics in Europe – the key to sustainable mobility".

The report supports the intention of the Commission to present an Action Plan for freight logistics in Autumn 2007. It recognises the interest of the link made by the Commission between logistics and comodality by means of defining it as looking at each mode individually and their integration in logistics chains, and that all transport modes should be encouraged to perform up to a competitive and sustainable standard.

Simplification of administrative burden: the report recognises the importance of developing "one stop administrative" shopping in the sector to increase efficiency, cut red tape and reduce costs. It welcomes the intention of the Commission to examine the details and added value of establishing a single transport document, as an EU model, for all carriage of goods, irrespective of mode; considers, however, that such a document must provide transport undertakings with clear legal certainty and replace the large number of existing transport documents. The committee advocates additional proposals for inland waterways under the NAIADES initiative and calls for a European coordinator to be appointed in the near future to deal with the Motorways of the Sea, which are included among the TEN-T priority projects.

Intelligent transport systems: the report notes the importance to logistics of advanced information and communication systems and the development of "intelligent transport" notably through Galileo and other EU initiatives, e.g. SESAR (European Air Traffic Management System), ERTMS (European rail signalling system), RIS (River Information Services), and SafeSeaNet, as well as innovative tracking and tracing systems. MEPs highlight the importance of intelligent transport systems (ITS) for improving the efficiency of all modes of transport and encourages the use of these systems as a matter of priority within the EU, while paying particular attention to their full interoperability and ensuring equal access to them, especially insofar as SMEs are concerned.

Infrastructures and Investment policy: the Commission is urged to devise and develop a dedicated rail system and to put forward initiatives aimed at bringing it about. It asks the Commission to ensure the dissemination of best practice in financing logistics as part of the Action Plan, for example, various initiatives using private-public co-financing, European Investment Bank and European Investment Fund possibilities and structural instruments.

Training and attractiveness of logistics professions: the report welcomes the fact that the Commission recognises training and life-long training as a priority and insists that the current lack of qualified personnel in logistics at all levels could be overcome by offering suitable training and, accordingly, enhancing the attractiveness of the profession.

Urban transport: the report supports the intention of the Commission to adopt a Green Paper on Urban Transport and calls for the inclusion of a chapter on urban logistics with particular emphasis on the dissemination of best practice.

Standardisation: MEPs call for an in-depth study to be prepared by the Commission on the appropriateness of various weights and measures standards in the freight transport sector in the light of

technological change and current circumstances. It insists that the Action Plan for Logistics should support innovative logistics, co-modality, and safer and sustainable mobility; proposes that the use of 60 t goods vehicles should only be allowed for certain routes by the Commission at the request of, and within a Member State .

Security: the report insists that the actions to be taken should ensure the highest level of security while balancing the relationship between security procedures and free movement of goods. It insists that actions should be taken to fight organised crime, especially in cross-border areas and in international freight transport involving third countries.

Planning: the report calls on the Member States to prepare national action plans for freight logistics within the overall framework of the EU Action Plan. It calls for close and permanent cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in transport and logistics at both national and European level to deal, inter alia, with the practical elimination of existing bottlenecks. It supports the Commission proposal to set up "focal groups" to address bottlenecks. but stresses that this activity must not be confined to examining modes separately and without a developed overview.

Statistics: the Commission is invited to make progress as rapidly as possible in developing an updated and efficient statistical database for EU logistics which is confined to effective and essential data and does not involve any unnecessary effort on the part of the undertakings concerned and, in so doing, to take care not to impose additional reporting requirements on European industry. It is also asked to increase its efforts to encourage proper implementation and enforcement of existing regulations and directives.