

Sustainable Mobility

Considering that:

the essential economic and social role of transport is to ensure the safe, fair, efficient and permanent mobility of persons and goods

the external costs of transport on society, especially in terms of safety (over 42,000 deaths annually on EU roads), health (through air pollution, the lack of physical exercise, noise, etc.), the environment, social implications (e.g. social exclusion, accessibility) and the economy (e.g. congestion costs are expected to reach 1% of GNP in 2010), are constantly rising

the demand for transport is rising significantly, its growth exceeding by far any progress made to mitigate the costs it generates, in particular in the aviation sector

during the course of the last decade transport growth rates have exceeded GDP growth rates in the EU, underlining the possibility, from an economic point of view, of a more optimal use of transport direct and indirect subsidies for the entire sector have reached unacceptable levels, especially for the road transport of goods and for cars used in towns

the forthcoming enlargement of the European Union will provide a good opportunity to improve the distribution of modes of transport, but will also stimulate demand for transport

the dependence on fossil fuels of our economies and the predominant share of transport in this consumption

EU member states have committed themselves under the Kyoto Protocol to an 8 per cent reduction of green house gases between 1990 and 2010, whereas CO₂ emissions are predicted to increase by 40 per cent during the same period of time

the sustainable development strategy agreed by the heads of state and government at the European Council in Gothenburg in June 2001 underlined the need to ensure that GNP growth was no longer linked to an increase in transport

transport infrastructure cannot follow the increase in the demand for transport, both from a practical point of view (the road traffic of goods is expected to increase 50% between 1998 and 2010) and from the point of view of balancing the various modes of transport (the trend to favour road networks over other modes must be reversed: between 1990 and 1999, the length of motorway networks in Europe increased by 25%, whilst the length of railways decreased by 4%)

building new infrastructure encourages the spreading of housing and economic activities, threatening landscapes the characteristics of villages and the quality of life in towns.

the transfer of people and goods from the road towards alternative modes needs to be encouraged, but will only serve to lessen the effects of the predicted growth

the environmental performance of all transport modes is to be improved

technological innovations must be encouraged when they help improve mobility, whilst bearing in mind that they can only lessen marginally the negative impacts of excessive transport

competition between modes of transport is often achieved at the expense of working and safety standards: decent conditions for professional road drivers are not always mandatory, and those that are obligatory are not always respected

The European green parties meeting in Berlin on 17 - 19 May believe that the following measures need to be set up for an integrated common transport policy. Only a determined and proactive approach will ensure a significant shift in current trends :

A. A European policy for the management of transport demand

Actions should be taken regarding traffic levels, within a EU framework which will offer national, regional and local actors a common direction aimed at removing the link between the growth of the economy and transport. In particular, this implies:

Increased community competence in terms of land and transport management; the Convention provides an opportunity to develop the tools for a European policy on urban transport and spatial planning, which aims to define common objectives and standards, and encourage the exchange of information between the various national authorities

Greater integration of environmental and transport policies through increased institutional cooperation and regular informal meetings of the relevant ministers

The European Green Parties remind the Member States as well as the Commission that the free movement of goods as well as the other freedoms mentioned in the Treaty, are merely instrumental to achieving the goals of Art. 2 of the Treaty, (among which, namely, a high level of environmental protection and quality of life), and therefore support proposals to limit the number of journeys

admissible per year for transit routes passing through sensible regions such as the Alps or the Pyrennees.

More frequent reviews of the EU's strategy in relation to transport; the next review must include expanded sections on urban and country planning

Transport performance objectives regarding safety, the decoupling of economic and transport growth, and environmental performance, especially in connection with Kyoto

The development of adequate decision-making tools: 'Strategic Environmental Assessments' should be used more systematically; environmental transport performance indicators need to be strengthened; indicators to monitor the decoupling of economic / transport growth should be promoted.

B. A fair and efficient common tariff system

Taxation and tariff systems must lean towards a progressive though effective internalisation of external costs based on a common tariff methodology, on a European level, with common systems (such as Germany's electronic system).

We therefore support the proposals put forward by the commission's DG TREN in its white book on "fair and efficient prices" for transport infrastructure pricing and call upon the Member States' governments to end their resistance against substantial prices for the use of road infrastructures.

The international taxation of aviation fuel is unavoidable; as a minimum, this should be imposed on a European level for inter-community traffic as soon as possible.

The transfer to other modes of transport must be facilitated by a financial transfer between the various modes: the creation of a European mobility fund partly supplemented by earmarked revenue obtained from a more equitable tariff system could enable European financial resources to be increased in order to support a transfer from the road to other modes of transport.

C. Sustainable investments, targeted towards transport users

Priority is to be given to public transport to improve the frequency, punctuality, speed and quality of the service; this also applies to two-wheeled vehicles and pedestrians,

No new road infrastructures should be allowed and the finances thus provided should be allocated for alternative modes. Investments should promote intermodality.

Transport policy should focus on meeting the mobility needs of all social categories and types of transport users. Proper training and information is crucial to encourage a change of behaviour

Investments in infrastructures likely to generate further traffic flows should be resisted, and all investments should be subject to a systematic analysis of their economic, social and environmental impacts; this is especially applicable to European investment aid for the future Member States of the European Union to support alternative modes of transport other than the road.

D. A coherent European strategy for transport safety

A European authority for road safety is to be envisaged, together with the coordination of the various agencies responsible for transport safety; increased European powers must allow a European strategy for transport safety for all modes; this should also include a definition of speed limits on certain community roads and common provisions for controls and penalties.

E. Social dumping as a competitive weapon between the various modes of transport

Social legislation regarding road transport must be drastically strengthened, better implemented and controlled at the Community level.

F. The environmental performance of all modes should be improved

More ambitious noise and gas emission standards should be defined for railways, aviation, road transport and shipping.

Sensitive areas (as a result of special ecological features, or due to the intensity of the traffic) should be protected according to common EU criteria.

Research & development (noise emissions, alternative or renewable energy sources, etc.) should be encouraged.

The 'noise around airports' directive should be reviewed to permit a more ambitious community wide ban on planes which create the most noise.