



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 5 October 2009

14075/09

**TRANS 373
MAR 136
AVIATION 156
ENV 634
ENER 320
IND 121**

NOTE

From : General Secretariat of the Council

To : Council

No. Cion prop. : 11294/09 TRANS 257 AVIATION 96 MAR 96 ENV 457 ENER 234 IND 76

Subject : Communication from the Commission - A sustainable future for transport:
Towards an integrated, technology-led and user friendly system
– *Policy debate*

Delegations will find attached a joint statement by the Visegrad Countries (CZ, HU, PL and SK) as a contribution to the policy debate on the above Commission Communication which will take place at the TTE Council of 9 October 2009. The aforementioned Member States wish the above joint statement to be entered into the Council minutes.

**Joint statement of Visegrad Countries
on the Commission communication**

“A sustainable future for transport: Towards an integrated, technology-led and user-friendly system”

30th September 2009

The Visegrad Countries welcome the reflection process launched by the European Commission, public consultation and the Council’s upcoming policy debate on the Communication “A sustainable future for transport: Towards an integrated, technology-led and user-friendly system” aiming at identifying European transport policy options for the future. This communication is a useful opportunity for Member States to submit their inputs for the elaboration of the future European transport policy.

From the perspective of Visegrad Countries the following issues should be highlighted:

1. Current economic downturn has a serious impact on the transport sector, and there are still uncertainties as regards the extent of the recession in time and depth. Therefore, when preparing the new White Paper on European transport policy, the Commission should also take into account the effects of current economic crises on transport. In this respect the deliberation of setting the possible scenarios of economic recovery in the next transport policy should be considered.
2. The conclusions drawn exclusively from the long-term tendencies and challenges are not appropriate or sufficient starting points for the elaboration of the new EU transport policy. Therefore the Commission is asked for more detailed examination of the results of the current transport policy and a more differentiated evaluation of developments in the regions.

3. High level of mobility has not been achieved in some regions yet, especially of the new Member States. Above all this is due to lower quality of transport infrastructure, insufficient financial resources for its maintenance and repair, out of date vehicle fleet and inadequate facilities for modern technologies. The Visegrad Countries are therefore persuaded that future EU transport policy measures should be adjusted in view of the different needs and circumstances of Member States, such as geographical position, economic development and status of infrastructure.
4. The Visegrad Countries would like to emphasize that any new measures of the European transport policy should be in line with principle of “Better Regulation” and should take into account the competitiveness of the European transport industry.
5. The Visegrad Countries are of the view that not only the modernisation, but also construction of transport infrastructure is an important issue. This particularly applies to the new Member States, whose potential in transport infrastructure and economy should be taken into account, when planning for the development of European transport infrastructure. The construction of the new infrastructure should be also seen as an impetus for helping European economy in current economic downturn.

Therefore the White Paper on European transport policy should concentrate not only on a better integration among the different transport modes, but also on the elimination of gaps and missing links among infrastructure networks with different levels of development. Creating a uniform transport system for the smooth functioning of the internal market should remain one of the main TEN-T policy objectives. Commission is asked to ensure that adequate funding measures at the Community level are provided in order to accomplish this aim.

6. As regards the intended revision of the TEN-T policy, the Visegrad Countries would like to emphasize that the introduction of the core network concept shall not result in the reduction of TEN-T networks co-financed by the Community Funds. In case this concept is introduced, it is necessary to ensure that the new EU Member States are able to use the resources from the Community Funds (TEN-T Fund, Cohesion Fund and Structural Funds) also for infrastructure projects that are not part of the core network but that of the comprehensive TEN-T network. Investments in these connections are of vital importance since they play an important role in connecting various regions.
7. Regarding funding instruments, the Visegrad Countries view is that introduction of self-financing should be only implemented gradually. In the next EU budgeting period 2014–2020 we request the Commission to continue with the EU tools for infrastructure development as Cohesion Fund, Structural Funds, and TEN-T Fund. Within the financing strategy for transport system appropriate attention should be paid to economic sustainability and viability of financing.

In case of countries with less developed infrastructure, the funding of improvement, upgrading and development of transport system, including also infrastructure, should be primarily ensured by using Community funds, such as Structural Funds, Cohesion Fund and TEN-T Fund. The potential new revenue coming from the stepwise implementation of the internalisation of external costs in all transport modes and the stepwise introduction of intelligent pricing system in term of “user pay” and “polluter pay” principles should be only seen as additional financial resource, especially used for transport infrastructure repair and maintenance.

8. The Visegrad Countries are fully aware of the importance of external dimension of the European transport policy. Commission's vision of deepening economic integration with the neighbouring regions is therefore generally supported. In this respect particular attentions should be given to the development of the north-south as well as the west-east connections and the integration of Eastern countries to the main transport network of the European Union and the development of the related road and rail networks aiming to improve economic connection with Eastern Europe. However, external dimensions of European transport policy should also take into account the initiatives in the Central-Eastern Europe.
9. The Visegrad Countries agree with Commission's assessment that modern technologies have a potential in terms of the search for solutions of transport challenges. However, they would like to draw attention to the need of urgency, find an appropriate EU financial framework which would adequately fund ongoing and future Intelligent Transport Systems with EU resources. It is evident that without appropriate support from EU funds it will not be possible to overcome current technological gaps between individual Member States.
10. As far as policy objective of safe, secure and quality transport is concerned the Visegrad Countries agree that the issue of road transport safety is still the priority, and they are looking forward to the Commission's Communication on the new Road transport safety Action Plan for the period 2011–2020.

In their joint statement the Visegrad countries focus on issues which are for them the most important ones. These countries would like to thank the Commission for this Communication and also the Presidency for guiding questions which will structure the public policy debate at the Council meeting. They firmly believe that sharing opinions of the Member States will facilitate to find well-balanced responses to the common challenges we have to face.
