

UEAPME Transport Forum

Position on the review of the 2011 White Paper on Transport

UEAPME Transport Forum is a co-operation platform set up by UEAPME (The European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) and bringing together representatives of European branch confederations, SMEs from road transport, manufacturing and repair of road vehicles. It aims to gather different stakeholders and develop joint positions on all road transport-related issues such as sustainable transport, organisation of the supply chain, road safety, and infrastructure efficiency

Background:

The European Commission proposed a Mid-term Review of the 2011 White Paper on Transport: "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system" through an online questionnaire. This review aims to assess the progress in implementation of the White Paper and identify key challenges for transport policy, as well as provide any suggestion for refocusing the strategy in the next year.

Our position:

As the mid-term review is concerned, UEAPME Transport Forum welcomes the important achievements of the White Paper regarding the road transport. As such, not only more environmental friendly vehicles have been developed due to emission standards but also, progress has been made in alternative fuels and following the revision of Directive 96/53 on Weights and Dimensions, aerodynamic vehicles have been introduced.

However, UEAPME Transport Forum stressed that there is a gap between the ambitious goals of the White Paper and the means for reaching them. The targets should have been linked to realistic short and medium term plans. The Transport Forum underlines that the White Paper contains many abstract initiatives, not always connected to the reality of the EU-wide trade and road transport and logistic operations. The Transport Forum is also concerned that the White Paper hardly suggests coordination with the Member States, with their policies and investment schemes. Therefore, an evaluation of the progress made reveals to be difficult for several reasons:

1. The objectives of the White Paper are unrealistic:

It is unrealistic to aim at a compulsory modal shift of the road freight over 300 km to rail or waterborne transport of 30% and 50% by 2030 and 2050. This proposal needs a realistic verification of its feasibility and better framework conditions and infrastructure must be created. Moreover, the mid-term review has revealed that many of the TEN goals are far from being reached as they are been set in the far future, leading to limited progress. We believe the goals need to be adapted in order to maintain realistic outlooks regarding midterm goals. As such, we do not agree with:

- Goal 1: It is necessary to allow the free choice of the optimum technology mix. Electro mobility cannot be the only solution, especially regarding commercial transports.
- Goal 3: is unrealistic and should be withdrawn.
- Goal 8: is too ambitious.
- Goal 10: Concerning the "full application of "user pays" and "polluter pays" principles" it is necessary to find solutions which are "economically compatible".

2. Inadequate to the real needs of road transport

The most urgent challenges for the road transport are not adequately addressed:

- There is not enough attention to the growing urban congestion
- Logistics (harmonized rules on e-commerce, simpler customs formalities) is the forgotten issue of this Paper.
- There is not enough attention that is given to the need of infrastructure expansion
- It is not clear whether the shift from road to rail is technically feasible.

3. Involvement of the Members States

Regarding the lack of Members States' investments in the road infrastructure, minima should be imposed for some domains to force Member States to invest. The lack of measures/controls to prevent social dumping leads to the implementation, in Member States, of national measures that complicate transport operations and disturb the good functioning of the internal market.

4. The need of an impact assessment

The White Paper foresees a too limited impact assessment from the current implementation, which is not sufficient regarding: the social dimension, the promotion of more sustainable behaviour, the infrastructure charging scheme (user/polluter pays for passenger cars and other transport modes than HGV's) and the harmonization driving bans and restrictions.

Moreover, much attention towards funding for rail infrastructure is provided but not enough for road infrastructure. The Internalization of external costs are implemented only for HGV's on roads but other mode nor light vehicles have EU wide scheme set.

Our proposal:

At the EU level, we ask for a higher level of harmonization. More attention has to be given to measures stimulating the competitiveness of European SMEs, reducing administrative burdens and raising awareness. In order to better face these important issues for the European Transport, we suggest the following actions:

- 1. To withdraw unrealistic goals and set achievable targets: transport costs at the European level should be monitored in order to avoid additional future costs and burdens for the road transport sector and to consider the effort already done for the reduction of fuel consumption;**
- 2. To focus on the development of a digital single market: implementation of the e-CMR as transport document; ITS; smart transport systems;**
- 3. To provide guidelines for harmonized environmental solutions in urban areas;**
- 4. To support technology and innovation, notably self-driving vehicles;**
- 5. To create more links among EU policies to cope with issues as social dumping, minimum wage, mobility of workers, demographic changes, training, knowledge of languages, which are not much taking into by the White Paper.**