

Procedure file

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Freight transport in Europe		
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3.20.05 Road transport: passengers and freight		
3.20.07 Combined transport, multimodal transport		
3.20.15 Transport agreements and cooperation		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		20/11/2007
		Verts/ALE CRAMER Michael	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Energy and Transport	TAJANI Antonio	

Key events			
18/10/2007	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2007)0606	Summary
17/01/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
15/07/2008	Vote in committee		Summary
28/07/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0326/2008	
03/09/2008	Debate in Parliament		
04/09/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
04/09/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0409/2008	Summary
04/09/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
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Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2007)0606	18/10/2007	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		COM(2007)0607	18/10/2007	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		COM(2007)0608	18/10/2007	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2007)1320	18/10/2007	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2007)1321	18/10/2007	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2007)1322	18/10/2007	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2007)1324	18/10/2007	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2007)1325	18/10/2007	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2007)1351	18/10/2007	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2007)1367	18/10/2007	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		COM(2008)0054	06/02/2008	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2008)0131	06/02/2008	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2008)0132	06/02/2008	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2008)0133	06/02/2008	EC	
Committee draft report		PE405.855	29/04/2008	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE407.636	10/06/2008	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0326/2008	28/07/2008	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0409/2008	04/09/2008	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2008)6073	17/10/2008	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2008)6486	17/12/2008	EC	

Freight transport in Europe

The present Freight Logistics Action Plan is one of a series of policy initiatives jointly launched by the European Commission to improve the efficiency and sustainability of freight transport in Europe. It presents a number of short- to medium-term actions that will help Europe address its current and future challenges and ensure a competitive and sustainable freight transport system in Europe. The external dimension of all of these actions will need to be considered with a view to efficiently integrating third countries and in particular neighbouring countries into the logistic chain.

The actions outlined are designed to help the freight transport logistics industry achieve long-term efficiency and growth by addressing issues such as congestion, pollution and noise, CO₂ emissions and dependence on fossil fuels that ? if left unchecked ? would threaten its efficiency. These actions need to be accompanied by work on a long-term perspective, undertaken jointly with the Member States, in order to establish a common basis for investment in tomorrow's freight transport systems.

The Commission suggests, amongst others, the following measures:

- Developing a roadmap for the implementation of e-freight, expanding on the concept of the ?Internet for cargo?;
- Making a proposal on ?e-maritime?;
- Working towards a standard for information flows;
- Establishing a framework for the development of ITS applications which also addresses freight transport logistics (including monitoring dangerous goods and the transport of live animals, tracking and tracing, and digital maps);
- Accelerating work towards interoperability in Electronic Fee Collection;

- Continuing the freight transport logistics bottleneck exercise;
- Drawing up a list of minimum qualifications and training requirements at different levels of specialisation to be incorporated into a framework that can ensure the mutual recognition of training certificates;
- Launching a dialogue with the European social partners to find ways to improve the attractiveness of transport logistics professions;
- Elaborating, together with industry, a set of generic (dynamic and static) benchmarks for terminals;
- Establishing a network between logistics institutes and promoting industry initiatives to exchange experience and disseminate best practice;
- Establishing a single window (single access point) and a one-stop shop for administrative procedures in all modes;
- Making a legislative proposal on simplifying and facilitating short sea shipping towards a maritime transport space without barriers;
- Examining the details and added value of establishing a single transport document for all carriage of goods, irrespective of mode;
- Assessing the need for introduction of a standard (fall-back) liability clause within the EU as well as the need for a legal instrument to allow full coverage of the existing international, mode-based liability regimes over the entire multimodal logistics chain;
- Simplifying port access requirements;
- Studying the options for a modification of the standards for vehicle weights and dimensions and considering the added value of updating Directive 96/53/EC;
- Defining green transport corridors, developing a freight-oriented rail network, promoting the establishment and recognition of Motorways of the Sea and Implementing the NAIADES programme for inland waterway transport;
- Encouraging the exchange of experiences of representatives of urban areas to help establish a set of recommendations, best practice, indicators or standards for urban transport logistics.

The European Commission will report on progress made in the implementation of the Action Plan in 2010. This report will also provide the opportunity to determine what further actions will be required in the areas outlined above and to evolve EU freight transport logistics policy in line with the economic context and technological developments.

Freight transport in Europe

The aim of this communication is to promote the creation of a strong European rail network which will offer a better quality of service in freight transport than today in terms of journey times, reliability and capacity. Improving service throughout this network should have a positive impact on all segments of the freight market, including that of the single wagonload. This objective ties in with the Commission's initiatives to improve the quality of freight transport in Europe.

Several options have been studied for creating the European rail network giving priority to freight:

- Option 1 - allowing the players in the sector and the Member States to act without any new Community input;
- Option 2 - embarking on a series of new measures to create a freight-oriented network made up of sections dedicated to freight and others receiving mixed passenger and freight traffic;
- Option 3 - launching a specific programme leading to a European freight-dedicated network.

Option 3 seems to be the most likely to meet the Commission's objective. There is, however, a risk that it will become too large, too costly and too much of a long-term prospect. Looking at the results of the actions already undertaken, it appears that the first option, the Community status quo, is inadequate.

Option 2, which would comprise initiatives designed in particular to underline the coordination between the infrastructure managers of different Member States, and to encourage and establish a framework for the creation of corridors, seems to offer a balanced response to the objectives set, for the medium term. It will have to complement the initiatives already under way with legislative, financial and political schemes. The financial commitment required is also less than that for creating a dedicated network. Nevertheless, the need to identify possible sources of financing has not been underestimated. In the longer term, this work could lead to the formation of a rail network that is partially or even entirely dedicated to freight.

The proposed measures are as follows:

Creation of a freight-oriented corridor: the Commission: (i) will propose a legal definition of a freight-oriented corridor structure, in particular setting down the main rules applying to this type of corridor; (ii) will encourage Member States and infrastructure managers to create transnational freight-oriented corridors. Each Member State will have to be participating in at least one corridor structure by 2012; (iii) will examine the possible sources of finance for corridor structure activities within existing programmes.

Measure on service quality along a corridor: the Commission: (i) will, after an impact assessment, propose a legislative measure on the publication of quality indicators; (ii) will continue to promote all measures designed to improve the transparency of information on the quality of rail freight service; (iii) will publish a report, before 2008, on steps taken by rail freight operators to improve their quality of service.

Infrastructure capacity of a corridor: the Commission: (i) will ask the corridor structures to draw up a programme of investments aimed at eliminating bottlenecks and harmonising and improving infrastructure capacity especially in terms of train length and gauge; (ii) will study the advisability of extending the Community legal framework to include the technical characteristics with which freight-oriented corridors will have to comply; (iii) will examine the possible sources of finance for these investments within existing programmes.

Allocation of train paths: the Commission: (i) will propose additional legislation on the international allocation of train paths and on the priority accorded to international freight; (ii) will propose enabling authorised applicants to request train paths throughout the freight-oriented network; (iii) will encourage infrastructure managers to offer additional efficient international train paths and to intensify the work already started in the framework of RailNetEurope; (iv) will specify the powers of the regulatory authorities in regard to international traffic and encourage the development of cooperation between them.

Priority rules applying in the case of traffic disturbance: the Commission: (i) will propose tightening up the existing legislation relating to the priority of international freight in the event of disturbance of the network; (ii) will ask the corridor structures and infrastructure managers concerned to harmonise the priority rules throughout the infrastructure under their charge.

Ancillary rail services (especially terminals and marshalling yards): the Commission: (i) will encourage the corridor structures and infrastructure managers to set up, together with the players concerned, an efficient and appropriate network of terminals and marshalling yards; (ii) will look

into the possibility of additions to the existing legislation to improve the transparency and ease of access to ancillary rail services.

All of these measures will be examined in the framework of structured deliberations in the form of a strategic group, for example with representatives of the Member States, rail infrastructure managers and users. This group will have in its remit in particular to define and identify the characteristics of the corridors, to determine what legislative and operational measures are required and to determine the powers and responsibilities of the corridor structures. It will have to have completed its work in the first half of 2008.

Freight transport in Europe

PURPOSE: to set out an agenda for the EU's freight transport system.

CONTENT: freight transport is fundamental to the EU's competitiveness. Well organised freight transport contributes to sustainable and energy efficient operations and strengthens cohesion by enabling businesses across the EU to reach peripheral regions. The mid-term review of the 2001 White Paper on transport forecast a 50% growth of freight transport in terms of tkm between 2000 and 2020. This alone raises a number of important challenges including:

- road congestion, which negatively affects costs, time and fuel consumption;
- the need to reduce pollutant emissions and noise;
- a high dependency on imported fossil fuels;
- the needs to offer high safety and security standards; and
- the need to recruit well qualified and well trained staff.

To address these challenges, the European Commission is launching, simultaneously, a series of policy initiatives that coincide with last year's mid-term review of the 2001 White Paper on transport. They are:

- The Freight Logistics Plan: This sets out a series of actions to promote freight and traffic management in a sustainable manner, the simplification of administrative processes, and a review of loading standards with a view to reviewing Directive 96/53/EC on vehicle dimensions and weights.
- A Communication of freight-oriented rail networks: This report examines ways in which to make rail freight more competitive by, in particular, ensuring lower transit times and increasing rail's reliability and responsiveness to customer requirements.
- A Communication on a European Ports Policy (see [INI/2008/2007](#)): This report provides a vision and a toolbox for enhancing the performance of ports as essential hubs in Europe's overall transport system.
- A Commission staff working paper 'Towards a European maritime transport space without barriers': This paper will kick-start a consultation process on allowing short sea shipping to benefit fully from the EU's internal market.
- A staff working paper on 'Motorways of the Sea': This describes progress made in developing the Motorways of the Sea and sets out future quality elements.

Particular attention is given to:

- 'Green' corridors: It is essential that various transport modes, as well as the corridors themselves, are combined allowing freight transport to offer seamless door-to-door services. 'Green' corridors should be characterised by a low human and environmental impact. Indeed, rail and waterborne transport modes will be essential components of these green corridors.
- Infrastructure, means of transport and freight management: Present and future strategies will focus on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) and the development of strategically significant trans-national corridors. Other elements include the efficient use of available facilities. The removal of operational and commercial barriers that currently obstruct access to the infrastructure will also be sought.
- Simplification: Particular attention will be given to the use of multi-modal transport chains and a single interface point for administrative requirements in freight.
- Quality: Rail, in particular, will need to improve its performance and waterborne transport modes requires enhancement.

To improve the efficiency and sustainability of freight transport, the authorities have to create the appropriate framework conditions and support the trend towards co-modality and sustainability. This includes adopting appropriate legislative measures, mandating technical standardisation, providing political and financial support and encouraging the promotion of best practices.

The set of policy initiatives introduced in this report point the way to a European freight transport policy that is based on co-modality, Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), green corridors and user orientation.

- Co-modality: this requires improving the efficiency, inter-operability and inter-connectivity of rail, maritime, inland waterway transport, air, road transport and related hubs in order to arrive at a fully integrated transport system offering a door-to-door service.
- Intelligent Transport Systems: this offers a means with which to improve transport and cargo management and increase the utilisation of the available infrastructure.

Freight transport in Europe

The purpose of this paper is to set out what measures, both the Member States and infrastructure managers, should take in order to find the right balance between financial equilibrium and an appropriate level of rail infrastructure services. Special attention is given to the use of multi-annual contracts, which the EU rail infrastructure Directives allow for.

To recall, multi-annual contracts are concluded for at least three years, with payments, decided in advance, covering the entire contract duration. The Commission is of the view that it would be useful if this approach were applied more widely on the basis of existing best practices. The use of multi-annual contracts varies considerably across the Member States. Roughly half neither use nor plan to make use of them. Some Member States provide no finance for rail infrastructure maintenance, others are in the process of negotiating contracts for the first time. An increasing number of Member States plan to introduce them, having put in place the requirements under the first railway package.

In 2006, expenditure on maintenance per kilometre of track, ranged from as little as EUR 220 in Slovakia and EUR 16 000 in Poland to up to EUR 160 000 in Germany and EUR 360 000 in the United Kingdom. This large discrepancy, over and above differences in cost levels, may imply that in some cases maintenance is not sustainable, whereas in other cases infrastructure managers may not have exploited cost reduction potentials in the same way all over Europe.

Multi-annual contracts represent a long-term financing arrangement for infrastructure maintenance. Stakeholder workshops concluded that multi-annual contracts lead to more informed trade-offs between taxpayers, on the one hand, and users, on the other, between maintenance and the quality of the network and between short-term maintenance and renewal.

Bearing the above in mind, the paper proposes that in future action should be based on three levels: (i) the Member States; (ii) infrastructure managers and (iii) regulatory bodies. Best practice will require that the:

- Member States conclude multi-annual contracts with their infrastructure managers. In cases where such contracts do not exist, Member States should provide for at least one infrastructure manager and to conclude a three-year minimum contract with them;
- Member States, and their infrastructure managers, should conclude multi-annual contracts that are consistent with their national strategic transport plans and the infrastructure manager's business plan. The same must apply to infrastructure franchises and for any framework contracts between railway undertakings and infrastructure managers;
- Member States should consult stakeholders on any proposal for multi-annual contracts before letting a new contract or renegotiating existing provisions;
- Member States should reduce costs and charges for the provision of infrastructure and use. To this end, the Member States should agree, monitor and enforce quantified cost reduction targets for a three year minimum period;
- infrastructure managers should measure track condition at least once a year on all their lines, and more frequently, on their main lines;
- infrastructure managers should define and publish indicators that allow them to assess and predict infrastructure quality and performance on an annual bases throughout the length of the multi-annual contract;
- Member States should interfere in infrastructure management in cases provided for in the contract and the manager should be given a broad degree of managerial independence;
- infrastructure managers should report, in their network statements, which lines have not been properly maintained and in cases where the quality is deemed to be in decline. This information should be timely enough to allow for prompt action and to act as an early warning system for users;
- independent body should be tasked with monitoring compliance with a multi-annual contract and with mediating between the parties to the multi-annual contract in the vent of any dispute.

On a final point, multi-annual contracts should be a precursor for making better use of competitive tendering for infrastructure services. Given that it will be difficult to put an entire national network out to tender, the tendering process may involve an increasing number of infrastructure managers, network statements, charging systems and access conditions. To minimise any possible negative effects, safeguard measures should be taken that allow for simple, non-discriminatory access rules and that are fully compatible with competition rules. At this stage, the Commission will consider whether or not to include a number of the previous recommendations in its proposal for recasting the first rail package, due in 2008.

Freight transport in Europe

The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted an own initiative report by Michael CRAMER (Greens/EFA, DE) on Freight transport in Europe, in response to four European Commission communications on 'The EU's freight transport agenda: Boosting the efficiency, integration and sustainability of freight transport in Europe'.

The report stresses that Europe's freight transport systems must meet pressing challenges to increase effective integration and sustainability of freight transport in Europe, making a greater contribution to improving mobility, energy efficiency, reducing oil consumption, polluting emissions, and external costs. The report encourages the Commission, the Member States and industry to support in future a freight transport policy which is more sustainable in terms of mobility, by promoting the use of more efficient logistics systems and the user and polluter pays principles for all modes of transport.

Noting that the EU's powers and resources for improving freight transport markets are limited, MEPs call on Transport Ministers responsible for the main European Corridors to take up the issue of infrastructure investments and at least agree on coordinating their National Investment Plans in relation to their respective corridors.

MEPs look to the Commission to define the 'green corridors' as exemplary mobility and inter-modality projects, to shift to environmentally friendly modes to reduce overall accidents, congestion, noise, local toxic and non-toxic pollution, CO₂ emissions, landscape and energy consumption and to increase the use of renewable sources and the intelligent transport systems. The Commission and Member States are called upon to offer stronger incentives to boost the environmental performance of all modes of transport.

The Commission should also allocate at least 40% of EU transport infrastructure appropriations to the railways and give priority to freight to reduce road transport needs. MEPs call on the Commission to concentrate EU co-financing on the efficiency, interoperability and upgrading of rail infrastructure, intermodal hubs as well as all other modes of freight transport.

MEPs also suggest that the Commission proposes, no later than the end of 2008, a programme for strengthening cooperation between the Member States responsible for projects in the area of urban freight transport, and that it facilitates and assesses solutions to the current blockages, with particular attention to goods transport.

In order to improve the transport system, the committee stresses the need to standardise and to simplify the administrative procedures of the authorities involved in the freight transport market, together with simplified customs rules and procedures at borders. MEPs welcome the decision to establish a European maritime space without barriers and urge the Commission to ask the appropriate international associations and organisations to develop a single intermodal document.

The report stresses the utmost importance of interoperable road charging for efficient freight transport in Europe. MEPs also insist on the importance of quickly adopting a worldwide standard for intermodal loading units. They call on the Commission to support projects concerning the differential use of high-speed lines e.g. for light freight transport.

Lastly, the Member States are called upon to give absolute priority to higher education and further education in the logistic and freight transport sector.

Freight transport in Europe

The European Parliament adopted by 541 votes to 6, with 15 abstentions, a resolution on freight transport in Europe, in response to four European Commission communications on 'The EU's freight transport agenda: Boosting the efficiency, integration and sustainability of freight transport in Europe'.

The own initiative report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Michael CRAMER (Greens/EFA, DE) on behalf of the Committee on Transport and Tourism.

Challenges of integration and sustainability: the resolution stresses that Europe's freight transport systems must meet pressing challenges to increase effective integration and sustainability of freight transport in Europe, making a greater contribution to improving mobility, energy efficiency, reducing oil consumption, polluting emissions, and external costs. MEPs encourage the Commission, the Member States and industry to support in future a freight transport policy which is more sustainable in terms of mobility, the environment, climate, the economy, security and social interests, by promoting the use of more efficient logistics systems and the user and polluter pays principles for all modes of transport.

Strengthening cooperation: noting that the EU's powers and resources for improving freight transport markets are limited, MEPs call on Transport Ministers responsible for the main European Corridors to take up the issue of infrastructure investments and at least agree on coordinating their National Investment Plans in relation to their respective corridors. Furthermore, MEPs suggest that the Commission proposes, no later than the end of 2008, a programme for strengthening cooperation between the Member States responsible for projects in the area of urban freight transport, and that it facilitates and assesses solutions to the current blockages, with particular attention to goods transport.

Green corridors: MEPs look to the Commission to define the 'green corridors' as exemplary mobility and inter-modality projects, to shift to environmentally friendly modes to reduce overall accidents, congestion, noise, local toxic and non-toxic pollution, CO2 emissions, landscape and energy consumption and to increase the use of renewable sources and the intelligent transport systems. The Commission and Member States are called upon to offer stronger incentives to boost the environmental performance of all modes of transport and to support the most efficient combinations of these modes of transport. MEPs stress that the rail freight network should be based on the most 'market-relevant' freight corridors.

Interoperability: the resolution also stresses the utmost importance of interoperable road charging for efficient freight transport in Europe. The Commission is invited, in multi-annual contracts for rail infrastructure quality, to draw up framework conditions for minimum quality standards throughout Europe. MEPs stress the importance of quickly adopting a worldwide standard for intermodal loading units. They also call on the Commission to support projects concerning the differential use of high-speed lines e.g. for light freight transport.

Simplify administration: in order to improve the transport system, the resolution stresses the need to standardise and to simplify the administrative procedures of the authorities involved in the freight transport market, together with simplified customs rules and procedures at borders. MEPs welcome the decision to establish a European maritime space without barriers and urge the Commission to ask the appropriate international associations and organisations to develop a single intermodal document.

Logistic training: MEPs call on the Member States to give absolute priority to higher education and further education in the logistic and freight transport sector.