

Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area ? Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system

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The Council held a debate on the White Paper on transport issued by the Commission in March. Ministers were invited to respond to a questionnaire drawn up by the presidency, focusing on the overall target, the benchmark goals and the initiatives for implementing them, set out in the White Paper.

Member States generally welcomed the White Paper as a very comprehensive document which contributes to achieving the Union's environmental goals, completing the internal market and tackling dependence on oil.

However, in the opinion of many delegations, the 60% reduction objective is highly ambitious and should be considered an indicative target, not a binding one. In addition, in order to maintain the Union's competitiveness, similar commitments should be sought at international level. Moreover, several delegations underscored the need to adjust policy measures to the specific situations in different parts of the Union or, more particularly, the need to tackle the infrastructure development disparities between different Member States.

Key priorities highlighted by delegations in their oral and written contributions include: (i) support to research, innovation and new technologies; (ii) the interconnection of transport networks across the Union and the creation of a homogeneous multimodal trans-European transport network; (iii) the completion of the single European market in the field of transport; (iv) the internalisation of external costs in all modes of transport; (v) the development of new financing mechanisms, road safety, and the promotion of multimodal freight corridors and of full modal integration.

Some Member States also stressed that the economic impact and the financial consequences of the proposed initiatives needed to be carefully assessed.

The Commission is invited to take the results of these discussions into account when further elaborating the initiatives to create a sustainable transport system.