

# **Hearing on the impact of the economic recession on the road transport market**

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**Speech of Zoltán Kazatsay, Deputy Director General for Energy and Transport**

**Panel session "Business and policy strategies"**

*Check against delivery*

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be here today and to exchange views with you, stakeholders of the road transport sector, on such a forward-looking topic as the future of business and policy strategies after the recession.

European transport policy has come a long way since the last white paper was published in 2001. The white paper, which was developed in line with the sustainable development strategy adopted by the European Council in Gothenburg in June 2001, was a turning point for transport policy, including road transport. Following the liberalisation movement of the 1990's, it introduced a ten-year strategy based on the concept of regulated competition. For the first time, transport policy made a point of taking into account issues such as social and environmental concerns.

The white paper now dates back almost ten years. Since then, new challenges have appeared and it is now time to both draw conclusions from its implementation and start preparing the ground for a longer term future, a process which Vice-President Tajani launched on 9 March with a high-level conference on the future of transport. This exercise will identify the main challenges for the future of transport and outline a strategy for future policy action in a Communication to be published in June. The Communication will prepare the grounds for a new White Paper – including a more concrete programme of measures – to be adopted by the next Commission.

I consider there are three main areas to work on:

1. Consolidation and harmonisation of the internal market: much progress has been done in the integration of the internal market but there is still room for improvement. The sector needs to become more resistant to external shocks and more resilient once these have taken place. In my opinion, the new road package which was recently adopted is only a start: it is an important step in simplifying procedures and will help improve the sector's professionalism, but work will remain to be done both to reduce the administrative burden and to harmonise the application of the legislation by the various member States.
2. Developing infrastructures for intelligent logistics and transport systems: the first concern of entrepreneurs is not to move trucks,

it is to move *goods*. *Intelligent transport systems* can increase efficiency, coordination and safety in transport, and the intelligent transport systems action plan, presented last December, is still in its first stages. Many possibilities in the field of *road telematics* still remain to be used. For instance why not introduce a universal on board unit?

*Parking spaces* have also turned out to be an unexpected challenge. The new networks of intermodal platforms call for new parking areas adapted to the needs of modern logistics. In this respect, the Commission will organise a conference on secure parking areas on 29 April in Brussels. The meeting will review existing initiatives which aim at improving parking areas for heavy goods vehicles along the trans-European road network, including the aspects of truck park security, information, certification and capacity.

3. Greening transport and new energy technologies: finally, the need to make road transport more sustainable and more efficient won't come as news to anyone here. A number of initiatives have already been put in place and the road transport sector has gone a long way in cutting its emissions and fuel consumption. But this is only a start, and initiatives which have been started need to be completed as a priority. The *internalisation of external costs* is a cross-mode movement, which isn't specific to road transport and aims to make transport prices better reflect their

real cost. Internalisation will further foster efficiency and sustainability of the road transport sector and should therefore not be put on hold because of the economic context.

*Cleaner transport systems* are also an investment which could bring long-term gains. Why not promote the penetration of electric trucks in vehicle fleets with a network of recharge terminals along the trans-European networks? Work could also be done to promote the wide-spread distribution of alternative fuels.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a particularly interesting time to be reviewing future prospects of road transport and I look forward to discussing these exciting possibilities with you.