



Logistics: keeping freight moving

- **European Union action to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of goods transport**

- **Freight transport - a rapidly expanding economic sector**

The transportation of goods began with the arrival of trade. As trade spread to countries further and further away, the ways of conveying freight also changed, developing new methods and technologies and becoming an entirely separate economic activity. Today, freight transport is essential to maintain economic growth and competitiveness.

Growth rates for goods transport recently exceeded those of the economy in general, and forecasts suggest that the sector will grow by a further 50% between 2000 and 2020. The EU has every opportunity to strengthen its global position in this sector, creating benefits for the economy in general and for the labour market and standard of living of Europeans in general. But to manage the increase in volume, the industry must address the major challenge of finding out how to organise goods flows in an efficient and above all sustainable manner.

● **Everyday freight logistics**

The efficiency of freight logistics has a direct impact on **product prices** and **security of supply**. However, the anticipated increase in freight transport will also increase the number of vehicles on the motorways and in towns and cities and the risks of congestion.

Such **congestion** could come with an economic price tag (such as higher product prices) and have social and environmental repercussions (such as pollution and noise) if rapid, effective action is not taken. By proposing measures to enhance the **efficiency** and **sustainability** of goods transport, the Commission is therefore reaching out to professionals in the industry as well as to European Union citizens whose **quality of life** it wishes above all to preserve and enhance.

● **The European Union's contribution**

Since freight transport is so often a cross-border activity, concerted action at European level will obviously greatly increase the chances of success..

In its efforts to promote freight transport in Europe, the Commission's approach is based first and foremost on **co-modality** - making it possible to enhance the efficiency of all transport modes and their combination - and on **innovation, simplification, quality** and the concept of "**corridors**". The initiatives are therefore aimed at several different transport modes and form part of a single package of measures with the following components:

- an Action Plan on freight **logistics**;
- several initiatives in the field of **maritime transport**, in particular a Communication on **European ports policy**;
- a Communication on a **freight-oriented rail network**

Clearly, these objectives will not be attained without the active participation of all stakeholders concerned and the Commission wishes to involve these groups fully in both finding the solutions and implementing them.