

## Introductory remarks by Commissioner-designate, Mr Siim Kallas

14 January 2010

Chairman, Honourable Members,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,  
meine Damen und Herren,

lugupeetud eesistuja, parlamendiliikmed, daamid ja härrad,

Mul on väga hea meel olla taaskord Euroopa Parlamendi ja esimest korda transpordi ja turismi komisjoni ees, seekord tutvustamaks oma visiooni Euroopa Liidu transpordipoliitika arengusuundadest järgmiseks viieks aastaks.

Firstly, I would like to recognize with great admiration all efforts made so far to improve transport in the European Union. The list of achievements is impressive. I promise to pursue the main values and initiatives already established.

Secondly, I hope to work during the next five years in close cooperation with the European Parliament. Given the experience in this Committee, I cannot imagine my work as Transport Commissioner without using your knowledge. During the last five years as commissioner responsible for budget discharge I think I have created good and open relations. So the new challenge for me will be to work with Council, your co-legislator. What I hope to avoid is bargaining with principle – we must avoid "pork barrel" politics where everybody must get something.

My starting point is that free movement is one of the greatest freedoms for citizens of Europe. And modern transport makes a fundamental contribution to this freedom.

Today's means of modern transport give access to a wide range of high quality products and services wherever they are produced. Economic integration, with globalised supply chains; fewer and more efficient production sites; and just-in-time deliveries – all this is only possible through the growth of transport activities.

These many benefits should not be forgotten.

At the same time, nor should we ignore the harmful effects.

My guiding principle will be to promote transport services that truly benefit Europeans.

Transport is for – and must be for – people, for our citizens and our businesses. And it must be sustainable.

And here, we have to recognise that our people have a long list of concerns.

Safety and security are the most important ones. Several recent events in aviation, road or even rail have reminded us of the fragility of the sector and have brought new fears.

Transport is also a large contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and the only sector where emissions have significantly increased. The need to decarbonise

transport - to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - will be the leading agenda item for the new Commission.

People remain dissatisfied with urban transport. Nine out of ten EU citizens think that the traffic situation in their area should be improved.

Congestion on the roads is frustrating for everyone.

People are critical about the quality of passenger services, business expect better freight services, the transport sector is hit by the economic crisis, and workers worry about their jobs and social protection.

What can we do?

I see seven areas where I would take concrete action at European level to develop the benefits and reduce the harm of European transport.

**First**, we must remove obstacles to the good functioning of transport. Europe has always taken a step forward when it has abolished barriers. Today in transport we have many. Some are political, others are technical, such as incompatible signalling systems for trains.

**Second** –an open European competitive market cannot be without rules. We have to regulate at a European level to protect and enforce safety and security standards, passenger rights, green vehicles and social standards. People and businesses will support us, if they feel the benefits of transport liberalisation in their daily lives. We must strike the right balance between profitability and people's needs.

**Third** – Delivering the means to de-carbonise transport and reduce greenhouse gas emissions will be a key policy goal for the new Commission. The transport sector needs a clear legislative framework to plan further investment in clean technologies. The Climate Change Agenda makes it imperative to make progress on our strategy to correctly internalize all the external costs from the various transport modes with adequate pricing mechanisms, ensuring modal shifts where justified. This is also the major point in the Commission's proposal on Eurovignette.

**Fourth** – we must accelerate the introduction of Intelligent Transport Systems. There are a number of key new systems where things are going too slowly in my view. Development of these systems reinforces our worldwide technological leadership in this area to the benefit of the European industry.

**Fifth**– transport has a strong external dimension. Air and maritime transport are global. I see it as my mission to support European businesses and transport professionals in global competition. I am strongly in favour of international regulatory solutions and I will work hard to facilitate international competition, always keeping the European interest in mind.

**Sixth** – we must increase and prioritise our investments into infrastructure and Trans-European networks. I want to see real leverage for EU funding in this area, and much greater European added-value. Support must be focused on real bottlenecks, address modal links and facilitate cohesion and other Treaty objectives. In much of Europe, investments have been short-term and often national in their perspective. In particular, connections between the East and other parts of Europe remain poor. So I would like to see the EU's enlargement better reflected in our transport policy.

**Seventh** – for all this, we need strong and coherent funding instruments. I see scope for improvements. Regional investments, those from European structural funds included, are in many cases in contradiction with our overall objectives. Substantial resources are spent to improve roads, while spending on railway networks and public transport seems secondary. We urgently need to address this.

We already have several large targeted EU funds. Why not create a European Infrastructure Investments Fund? I must clearly state here that this kind of fund only looks promising if we avoid money evaporating on small and marginal projects which may help to win local elections, but have nothing to do with our strategic objectives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must start to consider European transport as one entity designed for Europeans.

We need further integration – of policies, of geographical areas, of transport modes, of technical standards and of financial instruments.

Our activities must be united and cohesive. I propose to combine all these initiatives within the concept of a "Single European Transport Area".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ten minutes is insufficient for setting out a work plan for the next five years. Once confirmed by Parliament, the Commission will set out its Strategic Objectives. In the transport area, one strategic document is already well

advanced – the White Paper for the future of transport. I promise that this document will offer a strategic vision combined with a concrete list of actions and measurable objectives. And it goes without saying that I intend to work with you to define my priorities.

Thank you for your attention. I now look forward to answering your questions.