

Meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren,

Gentile Signore è Signori,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Es freut mich sehr, an dieser bedeutender Zeremonie teilnehmen zu können.

Heute feiern wir den Beginn der Arbeiten am Brenner Basis Tunnel. Wir gedenken außerdem dem Leben und der Arbeit von Karel van Miert. Er war als EU-Transportkommissar und EU-Koordinator einer der Gründungsväter dieses wichtigen Vorhabens. Wir gedenken besonders seinen Visionen und seiner Entschlossenheit aber auch seinem engagierten Bekenntnis für die europäische Integration.

Colgo l'occasione, in particolare, per ringraziare l'Italia e l'Austria per l'immenso sforzo compiuto che ha permesso di dare il via allo storico evento di inizio dei lavori per la costruzione della galleria di base del Brennero.

The Brenner Base Tunnel is without a doubt the centrepiece of Priority Project No. 1. But this project is more. It is a 2200 km long high capacity railway axis connecting Berlin with Palermo. **Impressive progress has also been made to the north and to the south of the Brenner Corridor:**

- **In Germany** the whole rail section between Berlin and Munich will be operational in 2017.
- **In Italy** the new rail axis between Milan/Verona and Naples/Salerno became operational in its entirety in 2009.

We are not there yet. **Much work still has to be done, on the Brenner Base Tunnel and also on the important access routes** from Munich to the Austrian border in the north and from Verona to Fortezza in the south.

Priority Project No. 1, being **one of the main pillars of the revised TEN-T policy forms an important element of the future Single Transport Area** as defined in the Transport White Paper, adopted by the Commission on 28 March 2011.

I would now like to take this opportunity to present the **White Paper** to you in a few lines.

The main challenge of the White Paper is to help European transport address future constraints without sacrificing its efficiency and while maintaining and enhancing the competitiveness of the sector.

We need to abandon the old habit of thinking in terms of modes and **start thinking of transport in terms of networks and systems**. We need to act soon, to be able to respond to these long term challenges:

- We cannot continue being completely **dependent on oil**.
- Our cities and skies are increasingly **congested**.
- The EU is committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050. To reach this target, transport will need to **cut its emissions by at least 60%** below 1990 level (70% less than today).

### **So, how can transport respond to these challenges?**

The White Paper outlines a strategy based on three broad objectives:

- Using **new vehicle and fuel technologies**, notably electric and fuel cells vehicles for short distances/urban areas and sustainable bio fuels for longer distances.
- **Optimising choices for passengers and consolidating freight volumes**: promote the use of public transport and introduce European multimodal travel journey planners. Multimodal solutions should also be further developed for long distance freight and we need to promote consolidation centres for urban logistics.
- **Better exploiting the infrastructure** by improving traffic management through IT solutions that also reduce administrative costs (eFreight) and by integrating and complementing the modal networks to better exploit all the available capacity.

**How do we get there?** Our strategy foresees initiatives in three main policy areas:

- Eliminating bottlenecks: the creation of a **Single European Transport Area** in which national and modal barriers are broken down, passengers have more rights and social rules are more uniformly enforced.
- The adoption of an integrated **research and innovation policy** that better links technological development with actual deployment.
- Modern infrastructure and smart pricing: the first pillar is a revised TEN-T policy that creates a **pan-European multimodal network** that links major

cities and economic centres and brings together the Western and Eastern part of the Union. The second pillar is **smart pricing**: the user will pay (more) for the use of infrastructure, but will get a better service in exchange: less congestion, more information, and more safety.

**Many of the challenges, objectives and measures mentioned in the White Paper come together in Priority Project No.1** and more in particular in the Brenner Corridor, which consist of 3 key projects:

- the 55 km long Brenner Base Tunnel
- the northern access between Munich and Innsbruck
- the southern access between Fortezza and Verona

Energy efficiency, reduction of Greenhouse gas emissions, corridor approach, multimodal solutions, efficient port/rail connections, elimination of obstacles, interoperability, research and innovation, smart pricing: **all these elements are directly or indirectly related to this project.**

With regard to the **Financial Perspective 2007-2013** the European Union has committed almost €1 billion to Priority Project No. 1, almost 20% of the total TEN-T budget for the entire period!

- 786 million euros to the Brenner Base Tunnel
- 58 million euros to the Lower Inn Valley rail in Austria
- 58 million euros to southern access Fortezza-Verona in Italy
- 57 million euros to Halle/Leipzig-Erfurt in Germany

The tunnel is due to be completed in 2025. This means that together, **we have the task and responsibility to ensure long-term financing**, from the side of the Union, the Member States and other investors.

Our common goal should therefore be to:

- construct sustainable infrastructure;
- work on specific measures (in particular internalisation of external costs, modernisation of terminals, environmental protection measures, Green corridor concept) which will accompany these new infrastructures;
- establish a framework for long-term financing.

Let me conclude by thanking you for your valuable contribution.

**By naming the exploratory tunnel after Karel Van Miert today, his name will forever be connected to this project.**

Thank you.

Ich danke Ihnen.

Vi ringrazio per la Vostra attenzione.