

## **6<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme - Stakeholder consultation**

### **CER contribution to the Final Assessment of the 6<sup>th</sup> EAP**

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#### **I. BACKGROUND**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme (6EAP) adopted on 22 July 2002 has been a guidance for the EU environmental policy over the past 10 years. The EU has implemented a number of priority actions in the four priority areas of the 6EAP, namely climate change, environment and health, nature and biodiversity, natural resources and waste.

While positive environmental impacts can be identified in the EU over the past years, in each of these four priority areas there has been less progress than expected in the 6EAP, as it was confirmed by the presentation given by the Director of the European Environment Agency (EEA), Ms Jaqueline McGlade, on 29 March during the 6EAP stakeholder consultation meeting. It was also indicated that **transport is a key area where there has been less progress than expected in the 6EAP**. CER fully shares this view.

#### **II. THE 6EAP: LESS PROGRESS THEN EXPECTED IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR**

Concerning the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in transport, the measures adopted during the past ten years have not lead to absolute greenhouse gas reductions in the transport sector. In fact, while emissions trends in Europe are on the whole encouraging, the development in the transport sector is alarming. With a growth of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 29% in the last two decades, the transport sector is not only failing to contribute to the overall EU emissions reduction target, but there is also a clear risk that its growing emissions will outweigh the gains in emission reductions made in the other sectors.

The EU has passed number laws in the transport sector aimed at this issue, such as the inclusion of aviation in the ETS, the Biofuels Directive and the Regulation to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from passenger cars. However, it failed to adopt any clear targets to reduce the overall emissions in the transport sector until the publication in March 2011 of the *Roadmap for moving to a low-carbon economy in 2050*, or to implement concrete policies to bring about a shift of traffic towards more sustainable transport modes, such as rail. Such a modal shift was one of the 2001 Transport White Paper objectives. In this context, the 6EAP failed to keep the modal shift issue on the EU agenda. **The 2006 White Paper review put a new focus on improving the efficiency of all transport modes instead of focussing on modal shift**. As mentioned in the final report of the Assessment of the 6EAP, this represents a **“significant setback for environmental policy integration in the transport sector and contradict the 6EAP’s call for decoupling”** economic growth and the demand for transport.

A priority action of the 6EAP was also to **promote measures to reflect the full environmental costs in the price of transport**. CER has long been advocating for a wider application of the ‘polluter-pays’ and ‘user-pays’ principles, as this is crucial to get the right price signals and bring about structural changes to achieve a sustainable European transport system. While the proposal to revise the Eurovignette Directive (1999/62), which should be adopted in 2011, is a step in the right Direction, more remains to be done on the path of achieving a full internalisation of all externalities (including congestion and CO<sub>2</sub>) in all transport modes - a policy measure promoted by the Commission as long ago as the 1995 Green Paper, “Towards fair and efficient pricing in transport”.

When considering other environmental issues linked to transport, no significant progress has been achieved either with respect to the reduction of exhaust emissions (specific emissions from cars have been reduced but due to the overall transport growth the exposure of people to PM and NOx emissions is still high) and mitigation of traffic noise. As mentioned by Ms Jaqueline McGlade, the EU is not even near the targets set by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

### **III. TOWARDS A 7EAP: MORE INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENT IN THE EU TRANSPORT POLICIES**

Achieving a sustainable and resource-efficient transport system is a key challenge for the EU environmental and transport policy in the next decades. Transport is at a crossroads, as drastic emission reductions have to be made in the sector in order to meet the EU GHG emissions target by 2050.

In a context of necessary reduction of emissions in the transport sector, CER would welcome the creation of a strong 7<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme (7EAP), as a framework to ensure a continued integration of the environment in the EU transport policy.

The success of environmental legislation depends indeed on the action taken in other policies. The 2011 Transport White Paper recognises that the current transport system is not sustainable and set clear targets for decarbonising the sector in the next decades. In particular, it envisages a reduction of at least 60% of the 1990 levels of GHG emissions by 2050, and a 30% shift of road freight over 300km to rail or waterways by 2030, increasing to 50% by 2050.

The 2011 White Paper also recognises the importance to **“proceed to the full and mandatory internalisation of external costs (including congestion) for road and rail transport”** to ensure a level playing field for competing transport modes and to ensure generation of revenues to finance future transport investments. This will be very important in the next stage of the revision of the Eurovignette Directive.

CER wishes that the 7EAP would help push forward the implementation of the right policy measures and the development of the necessary instruments to make sure the vision outlined in the Transport White Paper becomes reality. In this context, CER warns that relying solely on technological improvement to meet the transport sector’s targets is not sufficient to reach the levels of reductions needed and - sufficient effort must be put into implementing the necessary economic tools that will bring about structural changes.

The 7EAP could provide a crucial legislative framework to encourage an effective and timely implementation of measures for successfully realising the vision of a more sustainable transport system in the future. CER would urge the creation of such framework through a 7EAP, and assures you of its support in helping to devise and implement this.

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