



EUROPLATFORMS E.E.I.G.

*NGO in Special Consultative Status with the  
Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*

European Commission  
Directorate General for Energy and Transport  
UNIT B2 – Trans-European Network Policies  
1049 Brussels

**Ms Loyola De Palacio**  
Chair of the High Level Group

Bologna, 6th March 2006

Object: *High Level Group on the Extension of Major trans-European Transport Axes to the Neighbouring Countries – Public Consultation*

Dear Ms De Palacio,

I am writing as President of Europlatforms and Managing Director of Bologna Freight Village/Logistics Centre.

Europlatforms is the European Association of freight villages/logistics centres, that joins together more than 60 members representing 10 Countries all over Europe (Italy – Spain – France – Portugal – Denmark – Germany – Greece – Hungary – Ukraine – Luxembourg) and has always had, as main objective, the development of intermodal transport via Freight Villages/Logistics Centres.

I think helpful, before going on with my letter, to mention the Freight Village/Logistics Centre definition issued by Europlatforms in cooperation with the most important managers of Freight Villages/Logistics Centres in Europe:

*A **Freight Village/Logistics Centre** is a defined area within which all activities relating to transport, logistic and distribution of goods, both for national and International transit are carried out by various operators. A Freight Village must also be equipped with all the public facilities to carry out the above mentioned operations. In order to encourage intermodal transport for the handling of goods, a freight village must preferably be served by a multiplicity of transport modes (road, rail, deep sea, inland waterway, air); by definition a Freight Village/Logistics Centre is generally already equipped with terminal<sup>1</sup>. It should be located:*

<sup>1</sup> “a place equipped for the transshipment and storage of ITUs” - UNECE/ECMT, *Terminology on Combined Transport*, Geneva 2001 - pag.56

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1. Near urban areas characterized by a huge number of industrial districts
2. Near motorway and railway connections
3. In areas characterized by a big volume of traffic flows.

Freight Villages/Logistics Centres could be also considered as supporting infrastructures for ports (backdoor) due to the possibility they have to provide high level standard logistics services.

Traffic flows coming from far East Countries are supposed to increase over and over in the very next future, this will require the implementation of strategic infrastructures like Freight Villages/Logistics Centres.

I have been always following with interest all the European Commission initiatives aimed at developing the intermodal transport and improving transport connections with neighbouring Countries and I have been always observing, much to my chagrin, the hesitation of the EU competent bodies to recognize the Freight Villages/Logistics Centres as strategic infrastructures for the development of intermodality despite the evidence that, on national level, many Countries (Italy, Spain, Greece, Germany, Hungary) have already considered the Freight Villages/Logistics Centres as elements to be mentioned in the long term infrastructure and territory planning because of their role in rationalizing freight flows.

After reading the report issued by the High Level Group in November 2005 “*Networks for Peace and development, extension of the major trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions*”, I have considered with satisfaction the reference to Logistics centres but, I have also noticed that, on the total projects, only 9 refer to the realization of Logistics Centres despite the role they could have along the transport chain.

By underestimating Freight Villages/Logistics Centres’s potentialities and functions, we risk to not prevent neighbouring Countries from congestion problems we already have in old EU15. Furthermore, from the EU forecast up to 2030<sup>2</sup>, road transport seems set to increase over and over, rail transport and inland navigation, on the contrary, seems set to decrease over and over. If you consider corridors as traffic lines, composed of infrastructures that should facilitate the movement of freight by different mode of transport and connections among Countries, they should be alternated with interconnection points where the modal shift is possible.

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<sup>2</sup> EU DGTRren, *European Energy and Transport trends to 2030*, January 2003



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On the same level of ports, that the HLG has considered nodal points within the Motorways of the Sea (pag 16), also Freight Villages/Logistics Centres should be considered nodal points of all land corridors.

On behalf of all Europlatforms members, I am available to cooperate with you and give all explanations you would need.

Best regards

Gilberto Galloni

President

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