

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2011

The UECC comments on the EU's White Paper «Transport 2050»

The UECC comments on the EU's White Paper (COM 2011,144) as follows:

- The European Commission should opt for open and transparent communication with the Member States and admit that the targets proposed by the White Paper have a price. The objective to reduce CO₂ emissions by 60 % will certainly raise costs and have a negative impact on economic growth and employment.
- Infrastructure upgrades should be effected in areas where capacity bottlenecks have been discovered or where they are likely to occur in the future; that is, in those parts of the network where the majority of transport services take place.
- The expenses for transport infrastructure should be borne by the users (user-pays-principle), whereas the costs caused to the general public by noise and pollution (external costs) should be charged in accordance with the polluter-pays-principle.
- The internalisation of costs such as noise and pollution can be implemented only under the strictest conditions. It would be

better to concentrate on effective technical requirements that help reduce carbon emissions.

- It would be more efficient to set a target for the economy as a whole and let the forces of the market identify those sectors in which a reduction of carbon emissions can be achieved at the lowest possible cost.
- The UECC is against the introduction of city tolls. The European Union should respect the principle of subsidiarity and restrict itself to making suggestions for the improvement of urban mobility, as in the Urban Mobility Action Plan which it published in 2009.
- The UECC welcomes all measures that facilitate the implementation of a «Single European Sky». However, it also demands that more consideration should be given to the needs of the airfreight industry. Regulations should be put in place for the overnight flights that are an essential part of today's global supply chains.

The full text of the position paper can be downloaded from the UECC's website (www.uecc.org).

The UECC meets transport commissioner Siim Kallas in Brussels

On July 4, 2011, President Henry Uhring, Secretary General Rainer Füeg and working group member Wolfgang Heine met Siim Kallas, the vice president of the European Commission, to discuss the UECC's position on the White Paper «Transport 2050».

Further topics of discussion were:

- Financing transport infrastructures
- Projects to upgrade transport infrastructures
- Road Pricing
- Emissions trading

European Parliament: Trucks to pay for pollution and noise

At the beginning of June, the European Parliament approved an amendment of the «Road Pricing Directive», whereby the Member States can charge heavy utility vehicles not only with infrastructure costs but also levy an additional fee to cover the costs of pollution and noise. Furthermore, Member States will be given more scope to reduce traffic congestion, as the level of the road tolls for trucks may vary (up to 175 %) depending on the time of day.

The changes also provide for the possibility to define the use of the earnings from the road tolls so that they can be ploughed back into the improvement of transport infrastructures. The Council of Ministers still has to approve this compromise in its second reading. After that, the Member States will have two years' time to implement the directive.

Canal Seine-Nord Europe

In the spring of this year, negotiations were initiated with two companies that are interested in taking part in the project within the framework of a public-private partnership. If everything goes to plan, partnership agreements should be ready for signing by autumn 2012. Then construction work should start in earnest by the end of 2012.

Preparations on site have progressed very satisfactorily, most of the exploratory work is now finished, including up to forty archeological excavations.

On June 16, 2011, representatives of the regions concerned came to an agreement with regard to the construction, commercialisation and funding of the multimodal hubs which are planned along the canal in Cambrai-Marquion, Péronne-Haute-Picardie, Nesle and Noyon.

Also in June 2011, Voie navigables de France invited representatives from industry, the transport sector, the maritime and river ports and the local authorities to discuss ways to develop inland shipping services in the region.

More information on the Canal Seine-Nord Europe may be found on the internet at www.vnf.fr and www.seine-nord-europe.com.

Calendar 2011

Meeting of the working group

20 September 2011 in Strasbourg (F)

Meeting of the Executive Committee

21 September 2011 in Strasbourg (F)