

# NEWSLETTER APRIL 2011

## ***New president of the UECC***

Michael König resigned as president of the UECC at the General Assembly of 8 April 2011 in Frankfurt. He had been a member of the executive committee since 1998 and president since 2008. At the General Assembly he was elected an honorary member of the UECC.

Henry Uhring, CCI de Région Alsace, was elected as the new president of the UECC for 2011-2014. Henry Uhring is chairman of the working group for Franco-German cooperation at the CCI de Région Alsace. By profession he is a consultant in matters of taxation law for foreign companies which intend to set up a business in France.

After a reorganisation within the Chamber of Commerce of Austria in March 2011, Dr. Michael Grubmann has resigned as chairman of the working group «Transport». A successor has not yet been appointed.



Michael König (on the right) resigned as president of the UECC at the General Assembly of 8 April 2011 in Frankfurt. Henry Uhring (on the left) was elected as the new president of the UECC for 2011-2014.

## ***Reactions to UECC resolutions***

### **Road pricing directive**

In his reply to the UECC resolution, Siim Kallas, vice-president of the European Commission, confirmed the point of view of the European Union on this issue:

The internalisation of the external costs of transport is a key component of the transport policy measures taken to maintain a sustainable transport network. The road pricing directive is however only part of this strategy, which includes all modes of transport. Another important measure is the planned revision of the railway package in which the EU proposes to integrate a larger proportion of the costs caused by noise into the fees charged to the rail transport operators.

Furthermore, the purpose of the compromise on measures to combat traffic congestion which was agreed upon by the European Council and submitted to the European Parliament is not to impose additional tolls on road users. On the contrary, the EU plans to extend the regulations of the currently valid directive which allows higher rates during peak times only if these rates are compensated by lower rates at other times. The compromise will therefore remain revenue-neutral. Hence, the Member States will be able to optimise the utilisation of their transport infrastructures without imposing additional taxes on the business community.

Finally, Siim Kallas shares the view of the UECC that the income received from the charging of external costs should be reinvested in major transport infrastructures or technology projects which help reduce external costs. In cooperation with the European Council and the European Parliament, the Commission will endeavour to achieve this objective whenever possible.

### ***European Commission publishes its new White Paper «Transport 2050»***

At the end of March 2011 the European Commission adopted a new White Paper «Transport 2050» (COM(2011) 144 final). It contains the following ambitious objectives for 2050:

- A 60 % reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to the levels of 1990
- Fossil fuel-powered vehicles to be banned from the city centres
- Massive changes in the modal split with regard to transports over distances of 300 km or more (50 % of such transports to be effected by the rail network and the waterways)
- A 40 % reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions in inland shipping.

The aim is to create a uniform European transport area with increased competition and a fully integrated transport network that connects the various modes of transport and allows for fundamental changes in the structures of passenger and goods traffic flows.

More encouraging is the fact that the White Paper rules out any restrictions on mobility and calls for a uniform airspace and the interaction of all modes of transport in accordance with their respective advantages.

However, the Commission's new proposal is not consistent enough in its demands that external costs be charged to all modes of

### **Wisenberg tunnel**

As Doris Leuthard, president of the Swiss Confederation and head of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, already indicated in her reply to the UECC's letter, the construction of the Wisenberg tunnel will be postponed to a later date. Until 2025 the Swiss government intends to focus primarily on upgrading the East – West axis of the country's railway network.

transport. Congestion costs are still qualified as external costs, and the use of revenues from road tolls and other levies for the financing of transport infrastructure is not guaranteed (or rather, other public funds are to be cut back accordingly).

The White Paper suffers from a clear contradiction between its stated targets of «no restrictions on mobility» and «growth» on the one hand, and the paramount aim of the European Union for a 90 % reduction of carbon emissions on the other hand. Furthermore, there is a great risk that a large share of the funds will be invested in the new Member States, leaving too few resources for the area covered by the member Chambers of the UECC.

The UECC will prepare a response to the White Paper.

Further information on the issue can be found on the following website: [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/2011\\_white\\_paper\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/2011_white_paper_en.htm).

At its meeting on 7 April 2011, the working group of the UECC also debated the following topics: city logistics, new criteria for TEN projects, charging of external costs in the inland shipping industry and the UECC's position with regard to a possible relaunch of the scrappage programme for tankships used on the inland waterways.

### ***Calendar 2011***

#### **Meeting of the Working Group**

20 September 2011 in Strasbourg (F)

#### **Meeting of the Executive Committee**

21 September 2011 in Strasbourg (F)