

PRESS*release*

Commission goes for pragmatic transport policy

Mobility is a keyword in the mid-term review of the white paper on transport. Revising its transport policy, the Commission abandons the mantra of modal shift to fully unlock the potential of each transportation mode. In the same spirit as its action plan NAIADES for the promotion of inland waterway transport published in January of this year, the Commission focuses on efficiency, logistics and innovation, placing transport at the heart of the Lisbon Agenda. Reaching competitive and sustainable mobility depends on combining efficient modes of transport. INE looks forward to contribute to this goal.

Traffic gridlock remains problem No. 1

Transport problems have not changed since the publication of the white paper on transport in 2001, they even got worse. Congestion is a growing headache for businesses and citizens alike, negatively affecting competitiveness and quality of life in Europe. To the average person, a highway gridlock means longer drives to work. To the industry, it means a serious blow to its supply chain. Many businesses, when deciding where to locate, now give increased consideration to delivery and commuting times.

Looking for a better cure

The Commission maintains its objectives of sustainable and innovative mobility, but the tone has changed in comparison with 5 years ago. INE is very happy to find the same tone of the NAIADES programme in the mid term review. Instead of more top-down measures, the Commission resolutely opts for a pragmatic and result-oriented toolbox enhancing efficiency, innovation, intelligent and green transport. Integrated solutions to deliver goods across modes in Europe can only materialise when bottlenecks are effectively tackled and assets strengthened.

Waterway transport on the agenda

With regard to inland shipping, the Commission is not dragging its feet. The NAIADES action programme for the promotion of inland waterway transport is entirely integrated in the mid term review. Its implementation is planned for 2007, but some actions are already on course. The Commission launched the screening exercise on barriers as well as the funding handbook to enhance access to capital, and proposes 30% co-financing for the two inland waterway priority projects. Meanwhile, the council of ministers has attached its firm support to the NAIADES programme and the European Parliament is expected to adopt a resolution in October.

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