



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on the Commission communication on freight transport logistics in Europe

*2772nd TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS and ENERGY Council meeting
Brussels, 12 December 2006*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. Having regard to:

- the renewed Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs and the reviewed Sustainable development Strategy;
- the Commission Communication: Keep Europe moving- Sustainable mobility for our continent - Mid-term review of the European Commission's 2001 Transport White Paper;
- the consultations on freight transport logistics organised in 2006;

2. Considering

- that globalisation of production and the corresponding supply chains increase the need for advanced logistics, both within Europe and in its international business relations;
- that a well-performing logistics system, which makes efficient use of all modes of transport, both individually and in combination, is important for increasing European competitiveness and prosperity, safety and security and for promoting sustainable development through the reduction of adverse external effects of transport such as pollution, climate change, congestion, accidents, noise and energy dependence;

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- that logistics can contribute to enhanced cohesion and improved links to peripheral areas and islands;
- that effective logistics enable a better use of scarce transport infrastructure capacity;
- the lack of reliable statistic data on logistics which precludes monitoring developments in freight transport logistics and assessing the impact of policy measures;

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3. WELCOMES the Commission Communication on Freight Transport Logistics in Europe - the key to sustainable mobility;
4. EMPHASIZES that the development of freight transport logistics is first and foremost a matter for industry, but authorities have a role to play in creating a positive environment for logistics efficiency, innovation and growth; proposals for action at the Community level should be supported by systematic impact assessments which focus in particular on the effects on international competitiveness;
5. ACKNOWLEDGES that for enhancing the development of freight transport logistics public authorities need to cooperate at all appropriate levels - European, national and local - each according to their respective competencies;
6. RECOGNIZES that a logistics perspective needs to be integrated in the EU Transport Policy, and in other policy areas, and in that context, EMPHASIZES that, across the EU, where appropriate, coherence should be a target in logistics solutions;
7. UNDERLINES the importance of logistics excellence for maintaining and expanding know-how, skills and jobs in Europe;
8. SUPPORTS the intention of the Commission to develop, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, a framework strategy for freight transport logistics in Europe enabling more competitive logistics services and adequate environmental and social sustainability;
9. CONCURS with a co-modal approach - i.e. the efficient use of different modes of transport on their own and in combination - to optimise Europe's transport system, while acknowledging that more environmentally-friendly transport must continue to be pursued, including, where appropriate, the achievement of shifts to more environmentally-friendly modes;
10. WELCOMES the intention of the Commission to draw up an Action Plan in 2007 on freight transport logistics;

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11. INVITES THE COMMISSION to take the following considerations into account in developing the Framework Strategy and the Action Plan:
- a) A comprehensive analysis needs to be undertaken, involving all stakeholders and taking due account of all information gathered previously, inter alia from the Short Sea Shipping bottlenecks exercise, with a view to identifying major obstacles hindering freight transport logistics from developing faster in Europe. In addition to such a freight logistics "bottlenecks exercise", the exchange of best practice and sharing of know-how should be promoted. This work should be carried out by representatives of industry, social partners, other relevant stakeholders and Member States;
 - b) The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and intelligent transport systems in the supply chain should be encouraged further as a matter of priority. Possible initiatives should focus on communication technologies between administrations and private parties and amongst administrations themselves and should be geared towards interoperability as well as common messaging, and identification within an open ICT architecture. Furthermore, freight transport logistics must remain a research priority under the 7th Framework Programme;
 - c) The advanced positioning capabilities of the global navigation satellite system GALILEO will enable enhanced logistics services and transport management including tracking and tracing, thereby supporting high performance in supply chains for all modes;
 - d) A single window for submitting administrative documents and one-stop administrative shops for physical checks can make an important contribution to the efficiency of logistics flows, in particular multimodal flows;
 - e) The promotion of training and life-long learning is essential for a high-quality and innovative freight transport logistics sector. With a view to facilitating access to the logistics profession and to enhancing the mobility of logistics workers in Europe, measures aimed at improving the mutual recognition of qualifications, where these could have a clear added value, could be explored, including lower operational job levels;
 - f) In order to monitor freight transport logistics in a systematic manner, in particular with regard to the efficient functioning of the market for logistics services in Europe, and to enable informed policy decisions, suitable methodologies and indicators should be developed, as far as possible on the basis of available statistical data. Furthermore, benchmarks for freight transport logistics, involving, if any, minimum administrative procedures, are important for enabling an uniform assessment of logistics performance;

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- g) In the coming years, infrastructure needs to absorb increasing volumes of traffic. This not only requires constructing new infrastructure, notably on the TEN-T network, making use of public and private funds, but also optimising the use of current infrastructure, inter alia by improving interoperability. Efficient and sustainable logistics solutions, such as infrastructure traffic management and control systems for all modes of transport and interconnected information systems between them, should be promoted as they can enhance the capacity of networks. Furthermore, in order to distribute the burden on infrastructure more evenly, cooperation between modes of transport would need to be enhanced;
- h) Advanced logistics solutions improve the efficiency of all modes of transport. Up-to-date tracking and tracing and management of maritime traffic in European waters will increase the competitiveness of shipping, inter alia by making it technologically possible to reduce the number of individual controls in the case of purely intra-Community trade. Furthermore, air freight logistics deserves attention in the light of its growing importance;
- i) With a view to enabling further development of logistics services involving several modes of transport, infrastructure connections are of particular importance. In this context, it is of particular importance that transshipment facilities, including intermodal terminals, ports and airports, are encouraged to make use of advanced informatics. Furthermore, with a view to increasing cargo-handling capacity and speed and reducing costs, new loading technologies and cargo-handling automation should be promoted. Finally, it could be further explored how to make use of the existing network of Shortsea Promotion Centres to encourage multimodal logistics solutions also in inland transport chains;
- j) Actions to enhance interoperability, ensure open access on the basis of adopted Community legislation and reduce delays generated by mixed freight/passenger traffic should ensure that the railway network has Europe-wide sufficient capacity to meet the demands of rail freight services; this should be given priority in the important north-south and east-west corridors;
- k) The rules on the dimensions of vehicles and loading units should reflect the needs of advanced logistics, co-modality and sustainable mobility, taking into account road safety, safe and efficient use of road infrastructure, particularly aiming at the reduction of the number of empty lorries, as well as infrastructure constraints of Member States and repercussions on other modes of transport. Consequently, in order to tackle the problems related to rapid growth of national and international goods transport, available and new technical solutions which inter alia allow more freight to be carried - some of which are being explored in ongoing pilot projects - necessitate in-depth studies. Furthermore, with a view to promoting a seamless use of different modes in a single transport chain, the use of compatible loading units that facilitate the efficient carriage of goods could be studied, taking due account of the global context of goods transport.

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12. UNDERLINES the importance of close coordination between the drawing up of the Action Plan and the elaboration of the framework strategy for freight transport logistics for a competitive and sustainable European logistics industry;
13. EMPHASISES, both with regard to the framework strategy and with regard to the Action Plan and the individual measures therein, the importance of continuing interaction with the logistics sector and the social partners, and constant cooperation with the Member States; in that context, SUGGESTS the Commission to call on the assistance of a High-Level group;

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY

14. To actively contribute to the development of the logistics Action Plan and the logistics framework strategy;
15. To actively share and disseminate best practice;

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16. To step up its efforts to further develop freight transport logistics, including the necessary investments in infrastructure and human resources."

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