



Press Information

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Conference on Climate Change in Bonn

Railways and Public Transport must play a more significant role in global sustainable development policies.

The transport sector has the highest growth rate of greenhouse gas emissions, these toxic gases and CO₂ are also directly responsible for accelerating climate change. Despite this fact, very few key policies and measures have been adopted to stem this growth and attempt at least to stabilise emissions of the polluting gases generated by all transport. Prospects for the coming years give cause for even more concern. In the face of the boom in mobility and in transport demand in all regions of the world, it has become vital today to introduce resolute policies to achieve substantial reductions in toxic gas emissions, and first and foremost in CO₂.

Public transport and rail are the least polluting modes of transport and therefore need to be at the forefront of sustainable development policies, rather than road based transport for passengers or goods.

It is now urgent to increase greater awareness and accountability among all players in the transport sector through effective policies for mobility and sustainable development. The objective is firstly to apply the polluter pays principle enshrined in all of the resolutions adopted on sustainable development be it on a world scale (Rio, UN, Kyoto) or at European level (European Union Treaty, etc.). This policy must be reflected in market prices including external costs in addition to transport costs themselves, i.e. the cost of all damage (accidents, environmental damage) which today is borne by society as a whole (taxpayers). If these environmental costs are included in the prices charged for transport, the balance in the intermodal market will necessarily shift to favour modes that are more environmentally friendly, namely the rail mode and public transport. In addition to action on transport prices, other political instruments are effective to restore a proper balance on the market, i.e. funding of railway projects and of public transport, support for research, etc.

These were some of the considerations put forward by the international experts panel on transport and energy that met in the official side event included in the programme of the **SB 20** international conference organised by the **UNFCCC** Secretariat on 23 June in Bonn to prepare the next **COP 10 on Climate Change** scheduled for December 2004 in Buenos Aires. The side event was called "**Keep Kyoto on Track**" and was organised by the **UIC**, (International Union of Railways), the **CER** (Community of European Railways and Infrastructure Companies), the **UITP** (International Association of Public Transport) and **UNIFE** (Union of European Railway Industries). The panel included representatives from the **UNFCCC** (United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change), the NGO T&E (Transport & Environment) and **DB AG** (German Railways).

The panellists at the session outlined several avenues for achieving a genuine policy for sustainable development.

Harald Diaz-Bone from the *UNFCCC* stressed that the strong growth in the transport sector calls for more attention to the sector. He explained the different policies and measures to be adopted, and mentioned in particular the successful experience of Finland which should be repeated in other countries. The 1994 Transport and Environment Action Plan in Finland aiming to stabilise CO₂ emissions at 1990 levels was achieved in 2000. It was the result of implementing a well tuned mix of transport and environmental policies in a cross sector approach.

Heinrich Stroessenreuther from *Deutsche Bahn* presented German "Railways' EnergieSparen" project designed to reduce the amount of energy consumed for hauling trains by teaching drivers to drive more energy efficiently. German Railways were able to reduce energy consumption by 11% within the first four months of the project. 20 to 30 million euro have been invested in the project and some 10 million euro will now be saved per annum.

Markus Liechti from *T&E* also emphasised the challenges linked with growth in transport demand. Two types of action are needed simultaneously to develop sustainable transport systems, namely steps to develop new technologies and to implement packages of policy instruments, for example, emission allowances in the transport sector to provide incentive to achieve the proper balance between modes.

Gunther Ellwanger from *UIC* pointed out that the external costs of accidents and environmental damage account for 7% of the GDP today in Europe, and this figure does not include the costs of congestion. Over 90% of these costs are directly ascribable to road transport and it is urgent to implement measures to internalise these cost for all transport modes.

For further information:

Visit our **website** <http://www.railway-mobility.org>

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