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Publication | 30.03.2006

EU needs a new approach to transport policy

Transport growth report from the European Environment Agency

While **greenhouse gas emissions** from other sectors decreased, those **from transport increased by more than 22 % between 1990 and 2003**.

Speaking on the findings in the report, **Michael Cramer, MEP** and transport spokesperson of the **Greens in the European Parliament**, stated:

"**Europe is sinking under transport growth**. This is the clear message from the EEA environmental experts, which will hopefully drive home the need for action to address this problem. Increases in fuel efficiency through petrol-saving engines and progress in reducing the emissions from European industry are destroyed by the enormous growth in road and air transport. Air passenger transport alone has doubled since 1990. **Transport is not only the central problem to be resolved for tackling climate change, it also has major health consequences**. Studies by the European Commission show as many as 370,000 people die prematurely every year in the 25 member states as a result of air pollution.

There is an urgent need for the EU to devise an alternative transport system, with a main priority being the abolishment of direct and indirect subsidies, like the tax exemptions for kerosene. The failure to tax kerosene artificially sets cheap prices for the transport, especially on road and in the air, and serves to undermine many climate, environmental and health protection measures. Ultimately, we need fair competition, **placing rail transport on an equal footing and setting fair prices** for passenger transport and freight. Only by doing so can we stem the increase in damaging transport use and evolve towards a more environmental friendly system.

Unfortunately, **currently EU policy is heading in the wrong direction**. A study by McKinsey reveals that even with billions of euro of investments, the freight sector in the EU will decline by an additional 30-40%, which means a growth of 20,000 to 30,000 trucks on the roads. The market share of rail will fall from a current 14% to 9% unless a truck toll, similar to that introduced in Switzerland, can counteract the decline.

EEA-Report on Transport

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