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# 1 Introduction

The overall aim of the ALP-NET thematic network, funded by the European Commission under the fifth Framework Programme, was to outline policy and research recommendations for trans-Alpine transport. This aim was achieved by analysing existing and ongoing research and providing a platform for networking among relevant actors in the field.

Leading up to the final ALP-NET conference, six expert workshops were organised on all important subjects associated with the issue of trans-Alpine transport. The purpose of the final conference was to present the ALP-NET policy recommendations to policy makers, researchers and stakeholders and enter into a discussion with those experts on the findings of the project. This report contains the proceedings of the final conference, including summaries of the presentations and the discussions as well as the ALP-NET policy recommendations.

Following this introductory chapter, the next section contains the 12 ALP-NET policy recommendations. They are grouped in four areas; data, intermodality, pricing and policy making. The recommendations are presented in a short summary format. More detailed description of the issues and proposed solutions can be found in the specific ALP-NET project deliverables on data, intermodality, pricing and policy making.

The third chapter contains the proceedings of the final ALP-NET conference. For each of the four sessions the presentations and the discussions are summarised.

Finally, the annex contains the list of participants of the final conference. The presentations of the conference, as well as all ALP-NET reports and the list of participants, can also be downloaded in electronic format from [www.alp-net.org](http://www.alp-net.org).

## **2 The ALP-NET Policy Recommendations**

### **I. Data**

#### **2.1 Data Harmonisation**

There are currently numerous excellent data sources for trans-Alpine transport but not all of them are entirely consistent or presented in comparable format. To be usable to its full extent all data should be harmonised into one single database or publication. The establishment of the Swiss/EU observatory is an important step and a unique opportunity to build an observatory for the entire Alpine area.

#### **2.2 Data Collection**

One of the best data sources on trans-Alpine transport is currently the Cross Alpine Freight Transport Survey (CAFT) which is carried out every five years jointly by France, Austria and Switzerland. The co-operation of Germany, Italy and Slovenia in this survey would further increase the quality and political acceptability of this data set.

### **II. Intermodality**

#### **2.3 The Future of Rolling Road**

The role and future of rolling road transport across the Alps should be specified at the political level. Currently it is not clear whether rolling road is merely a transitional solution as a reaction to road capacity saturation or rather a new intermodal technique to be further developed in co-operation with the road transport operators.

#### **2.4 Interoperability and the Performance of the Railways**

Railway interoperability should to be improved on the technical level as well as on the organisational level (e.g. licensing of locomotives and their operators). The issue of organisational interoperability is crucial to the success of an integrated rail system and should be taken as seriously as the technical problems. Quality and reliability of railway services should be improved to increase the competitiveness of railway services.

## **2.5 Trans-Alpine Maritime Transport**

The development of maritime alternatives appears to be feasible, especially on routes between Italy and Spain which are currently dominated by road transport. In order to support the modal shift from road to maritime transport specific flat rates for transit and transshipment in the ports should be introduced.

### **III. Pricing**

## **2.6 Combine Policy Instruments**

The multiple objectives of transport policy, such as environmental protection, economic efficiency, etc. require multiple policy instruments to be used in combination. Pricing is one important instrument among many. Others include rules, regulations and technology. The challenge for policy makers is to find the right mix between a multitude of useful and necessary instruments.

## **2.7 The Role of Economic Theory**

Economic theory can make a contribution to efficiently reach certain targets or goals. The targets and goals themselves have to be defined in the political decision making process.

## **2.8 Pricing? – Yes**

Transport infrastructure pricing will only have an effect on trans-Alpine transport if it is extended along the entire corridors across the EU. Thus it should be mandatory and harmonised for the different Alpine corridors.

## **2.9 Target Approach**

There are a number of advantages to using a "target approach" rather than a pure "efficiency approach":

- quantitative targets (e.g. ecological burden, traffic load) can be established in a democratic process;
- no necessity to calculate the "real costs";
- a mix of pricing and other measures can be easily employed;
- no restriction of cross financing to the transport sector.

#### **IV. Policy Making**

##### **2.10 Regulation**

Regulations are currently a reality in sensitive areas and could remain a policy option in the future. A certain number of trips or amount of environmental pollution could be allocated efficiently and lead to a superior outcome as compared to an unpredictable ad hoc steering of capacity according to traffic conditions, air pollution, etc.

##### **2.11 Multilateralism**

Only multilateralism can achieve viable solutions. Bilateral or national solutions only lead to the reduction of the general interests to exclusive partial concerns of certain groups. There is an urgent need for supra national European governance in this field.

##### **2.12 Further Action in Research**

The positive experience of ALP-NET demonstrates the need for a continuous networking platform. Research in various areas is continuously being undertaken by research centres, universities, consultancies, national ministries and stakeholder groups. This research should also be collected and integrated to make it accessible. Bridging the gap between policy makers, stakeholders and researchers remains a vital task in the future.

### 3 Proceedings of the Final ALP-NET Conference

The final ALP-NET conference "What future for trans-Alpine transport" took place on 22-23 September 2004 in Brussels. The following chapter summarises the presentations and discussion which took place during this conference. All presentations can be downloaded from [www.alp-net.org](http://www.alp-net.org).

#### 3.1 Session 1: Consolidated ALP-NET/CAFT Alpine Data Report

*Chair: Michael Schmidt – ICCR*

**Christian Reynaud** and **Adrian Vilcan** presented the consolidated ALP-NET/CAFT report which presents the results of the 1999 Cross Alpine Freight Transport Survey (CAFT). In this report the data is analysed and compared to the data of the 1994 CAFT survey. The excellent quality of the data set allows for the detailed analysis of trans-Alpine flows. This was demonstrated, among other things, by a detailed analysis of north bound trans-Alpine flows originating in Greece. The CAFT data also contains the type of goods transported as well as the origin and destination of the vehicle. This allows for further insights into the structure of goods transported and the modal split and market share of various modes for the different types of goods. It also allows for an assessment of the route choice of road transport operators and the sensibility to price changes on different Alpine crossings.

**Michel Houée** of the French Ministry of Transport stressed the issue of the closure of the Mt. Blanc tunnel during the survey period in 1999. This opened the opportunity to assess in more detail the detour traffic originating from the closure of one of the Alpine crossings. It would be especially interesting to look at the effect of this closure on the rolling road transport through Austria and Switzerland. The report should stress the fact that there is currently no rolling road transport through the French Alps. For these reasons the most likely effect of the Mt. Blanc closure seems to have been a geographical shift of road transport to different crossings rather than a modal shift from road to rail. The final common CAFT report could also include some sample interviews to illustrate the process of data collection.

**Thomas Spiegel** of the Austrian Ministry of Transport could not participate at the conference but he provided a written statement which was read out. In this statement he generally welcomed the creation of the common CAFT report and stressed the importance of arriving at a harmonised data publication for trans-Alpine transport. The final version of the report should include also the costs of

road transport across the various crossings and a graphical network description to allow the reader to place the flows described in the table and texts.

**Yvonne Achermann** of the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development also welcomed the attempt to create a common CAFT report. This will be the first time such a common report will be published. The overall structure of the report shows a good balance of issues addressed. Some of the figures in this draft version of the report differ from the figures in the Swiss Alpinfo database which is somewhat surprising given that Alpinfo is based on the Swiss CAFT data. These differences should be sorted out by comparing the French, the Austrian and the Swiss data.

**Anna Panagopoulou** of the European Commission (DG TREN) presented the status of the work for establishing the common Swiss-EU Alpine Observatory. A bilateral committee of the Switzerland and the EU is negotiating the final points for the implementation of the observatory which should begin its operation in 2004. Originally the observatory is a result of the land transport agreement between Switzerland and the EU but eventually it should cover the entire Alpine Arch and not just the Swiss crossings.

### **Discussion**

**Dimitrios Tsamboulas** addressed the issue of Greek traffic crossing the Alps. Due to a new port in Igumeniza and larger ships used for the transport of lorries to Italy Greek road transport across the Alps will increase during the coming years.

**Ueli Balmer** explained the first experiences regarding modal shift from the Swiss heavy goods vehicle tax. The data seems to suggest that the higher price for road transport has been by and large compensated by raising the weight limit for trucks to 40 tons. Therefore not much modal shift from road to rail has been observed.



## 3.2 Session 2: Intermodal Transport and Alternative Routes

*Chair: Alain Rathery – ECMT*

**Antonio Musso** of the University of Rome "La Sapienza" presented the facts and figures for trans-Alpine intermodal transport, including total traffic and modal shifts during the last years. An even more detailed analysis was provided for three specific O/D pairs. First, the relation between Germany and Italy was analysed. This is responsible for most of the traffic across the Alps. Second, the detailed breakdown of combined transport between France and Italy was presented. Finally, rolling road transport was analysed. Rolling road transport is used mostly between Italy and Germany on crossings through Austria and Switzerland. In France there is currently no rolling road transport.

**Claude Morin** of the European Commission (DG TREN) spoke about the policy developments in the framework of the EU. The White Paper for the Common Transport Policy stressed modal shift from road to rail (and possibly to maritime transport) as its main policy objectives for the period until the year 2010. The development of new techniques could support the efficiency of intermodal transport but any of those technical developments have to follow the rules of the public procurement policies of the European Union. This may cause a problem with the further development of the French Modalohr technique. One of the important instruments used by the European Commission to support the development of an integrated transport system in Europe is the Marco Polo Programme. This programme funds projects which work on a modal shift from road to more environmentally friendly and energy efficient means of transport.

**Anna Panagopoulou** of the European Commission (DG TREN) presented the recent policy developments on the "Motorways of the Sea" as part of the Trans-European Transport Network. It was proposed among the priority projects to include projects on the development of "motorways of the sea". These projects should constitute priority projects, on an equal footing with land infrastructure in the trans-European network and they may improve the connections between island countries and countries isolated by natural barriers such as the Alps, the Pyrenees and the Baltic Sea. They could also reduce road congestion. The following four routes are currently being proposed:

1. Motorway of the Baltic Sea (linking the Baltic Sea Member States with Member States in Central and Western Europe)
2. Motorway of the sea of western Europe (leading from the Iberian peninsula via the Atlantic Arc to the North Sea and the Irish Sea)

3. Motorway of the sea of south-east Europe (connecting the Adriatic Sea to the Ionian Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean to include Cyprus)

4. Motorway of the sea of south-west Europe (western Mediterranean), connecting Spain, France, Italy and including Malta, and linking with the motorway of the sea of south-east Europe .

**Theodor Allemann** of the International Union of Combined Road-Rail Transport Companies (UIRR) spoke about the success stories and problems with combined transport across the Alps. Given the latest projections on the development of trans-Alpine transport it seems unlikely that the modal shift objectives of the European Commission can be fulfilled. This is partly due to the quality of railway transport, e.g. the punctuality of the trains. The example of the Brenner shows that competition between operators can lead to quality improvements especially regarding the reliability of services. Currently the barriers for entering the markets are too high for private companies. The licensing of locomotives and rolling stock has to be made more simple otherwise no proper competition can arise. On the whole, unaccompanied combined transport is to be preferred to rolling road. It may require more sophisticated logistics but it constitutes a real long distance modal shift from road to rail and not just short distance loading of trucks on rail.

### Discussion

**Martin Burkhard** questioned whether maritime transport is indeed more environmentally friendly than other means of transport. However, the relief of congestion may be a valid reason to shift to maritime transport.

**Conrad Seidelmann** mentioned a new type of containers which is currently in the process of being internationally licensed. The advantage of this new type is that they can be stacked on lorries and on sea vessels. This could double the productivity of intermodal road-sea transport as compared to the current transporting of trailers on sea vessels.

## 3.3 Session 3: Infrastructure Pricing and Trans-Alpine Transport Policy

*Chair: Panos Tzieropoulos – EPFL, Lausanne*

**Florian Gubler** of Ecoplan presented the results and recommendations from the ALP-NET workshop on pricing and financing of transport infrastructure. In Alpine

transport policy, there are multiple objectives and a variety of instruments. Objectives have to be set in a political process. Pricing and financing mechanisms are effective tools but they will not solve all problems. A comprehensive Alpine transport policy needs to include pricing and financing instruments, but should not be limited to those. Additional complementary measures will be necessary. In order to avoid new distortions between countries and within countries (detour traffic), a road pricing scheme should include all motor vehicles and at least the highway and main road network. In order to improve acceptability of the pricing schemes, it is possible not to include passenger cars in a first stage. The Alps are a sensitive area with regard to the impacts of transport. This should be recognized when applying pricing schemes to trans-Alpine corridors. However, the concept of sensitive areas cannot be exclusively used in favour of the Alps. The planned new EU framework directive on pricing is a political window of opportunity. The European Union and the Member States have to make best use of it. At the moment, many countries are about to introduce new forms of road pricing (Germany, Austria and others). Therefore, the intention of the European Union to set up a new framework directive on pricing is a limited-period opportunity to influence the future of road pricing in Europe.

**Dirk van Vreckem** of the European Commission (DG TREN) gave an overview of the new Commission proposal for the new framework directive on infrastructure charging. This proposal had to take into account and balance different interests such as sustainable development, financing of transport infrastructure, etc. It was tried to built on what already exists in the Member States. For those reasons the current proposal may fall short of the ambitions expressed in the previous Green and White Papers. At the moment the framework directive applies for motorways which are part of the TEN-T network but Member States are free to extended the system to also cover other roads and vehicles below 3.5 tons. Member States are also allowed to differentiate by weight of the vehicles, emission standard, type of infrastructure, congestion and sensitivity of an area. The use of revenues must go back into the transport sector because of the need to maintain a proper infrastructure and to balance the modes of transport. Cross subsidies between modes will be allowed under exceptional circumstances, mainly in mountainous areas. Cross subsidies will be allowed up to a limit of 25%

**Catharina Sikow** of the European Commission (DG TREN) spoke about EU research and policies on pricing. The Green Paper on the Fair Payment for Infrastructure Use marked the beginning of a long discussion process on infrastructure charging in the EU. High level groups and research have now been dealing with the topic for several years and the results have flown into the new White Paper on the Common Transport Policy. The main principals put forward by the research activities of the Commission are the use of marginal cost pricing and the role of (cross)financing of transport infrastructure. During the last years the research has move from theory to implementation. The main questions are: What

does Marginal Cost Pricing mean in practice? How can the monetary value of intangibles be estimated? Do pricing measures have an impact on traffic in real life? How are the revenues or deficits from infrastructure charging best used? How can pricing schemes be made acceptable for the general public?

**Michael Schmidt** of the ICCR presented the ALP-NET results on transport policy making for the Alpine regions. The dilemma of Alpine transport politics at the national level where regional governments, transport operators and the local population each follow different interests calls for a European mode of governance. In order to solve this problem at the European level full use should be made of the existing structures within the EU and the Alpine Convention. The concept of “sensitive areas” could be a useful basis for designing policy regimes but this requires an operational concept to be developed and politically accepted at the European level. Clear political goals could be implemented efficiently (e.g. transport sector integration, environmental standards and economic needs) but this requires a common European understanding of all level of government of the goals to be achieved.

### **Discussion**

**Ansgar Kauf** argued that the change of the weight limit for trucks in Switzerland lead to a modal shift from rail to road. Since the benefits of road transport are not taken sufficiently into account in the calculations the calls for cross subsidies may not be justified.

**Philippe Ayoun** raised concerns that a limit of 25% for cross subsidies from road to rail may not be sufficient to alter the modal split. In sensitive areas it should be considered to raise this limit significantly.

**Markus Liechti** voiced his confusion about the EC proposal for a new framework directive; there seems to remain a lot of uncertainty with regards to cross financing. Also it is questionable in to divide the network into three levels as done in the Commission proposal, namely the TEN-T, a parallel network which could be used by detour traffic and a third level which, under the subsidiarity principle, entirely falls under the control of the Member States or regions.

### 3.4 What Future for Trans-Alpine Transport? The Way Forward

*Chair: Christian Reynaud – NESTEAR*

**Alfonso Gonzales-Finat** of the European Commission (DG TREN) presented the results of the "Van Miert Group" on the TEN-T network. Some of the most important Alpine crossings are also priorities in the development of the TEN-T. The barriers for implementation mentioned in the policy documents are consistent with those mentioned by the ALP-NET project. In fact the trans-Alpine problem is one of the central problems of transport policy in Europe, especially regarding the objectives from modal shift from road to rail.

**Michael Schmidt** of the ICCR presented the results and the 12 policy recommendations from the ALP-NET network as laid out in detail in chapter two of this report (see chapter 2 above).

**Noël Lebel** of the Alpine Convention voiced his concern about the lack of boldness of the ALP-NET consortium. However, the issues addressed during the project were chosen correctly. Mr. Lebel also stressed the importance of the transport protocol of the Alpine Convention. None of the Alpine countries can solve this problem alone and therefore it is vital that all of them co-operate soon in the framework of this convention. But also the European Union, which currently includes four, and soon five, Alpine countries should be involved in the solution to traffic problems in the Alps. Switzerland will be institutionally involved through the land transport agreement. The Alpine convention will be linked to existing observatories in order to make best use of the existing indicators. In order to work more efficiently there should be an annual get-together of all relevant institutions and actors involved in the field.

**Fabio Croccolo** of the Italian Ministry of Transport expressed his satisfaction with the work conducted by the ALP-NET network. The personal contact between relevant actors is vital to improve the co-operation. The transport protocol of the Alpine Convention will not be ratified by Italy in its current form. Therefore the Italian Ministry of Transport suggests to find a agreement for a new transport protocol which would then be acceptable to all contracting parties of the Alpine Convention. The participation of Italy in the CAFT remains a worthwhile idea but maybe in the future it will be possible to come up with an automated system which could also be used for traffic management purposes. Mr. Croccolo also stressed the difference between "regulation" and "restriction". From the Italian perspective it is vital to comply with the fundamental principle of the free movement of goods

within the EU. However, this has to be seen within a reasonable framework of taking the cost and time restrictions of transport into account.

**Thomas Glöckel** of the Austrian Ministry of Transport also stressed that the recommendations of the ALP-NET project could have been more bold. In fact the problem is that the "freedom of the movement of goods" as laid out in 1959 in the Rome treaty has reached its limit due to the strong growth of traffic over the last forty years. We have now reached a point where the freedom of the movement of goods is in direct conflict with the freedom of European citizens to live in a healthy environment. The solutions discussed at this conference are all valuable contributions to the discussion but the time horizon is too long to be useful for a short term solution of the problems. In fact the immediate solutions need to be more radical.

**Markus Liechti** of Transport and Environment (T&E) called for a clear operational definition for the concept of sensitive areas. The discussion on the new framework directive is taking too much time and this may become a problem in connection with the expiry of the Ecopoint system at the end of the year 2003. Anyway it is difficult to see how a pricing regime could entirely replace the current Ecopoint system. The bottlenecks for the improvement of rail transport are mainly organisational and institutional. T&E is very much in favour of using a target based approach to policy making in the framework of sustainable development.

**Dirk van Vreckem** of the European Commission (DG TREN) reacted in detail to each of the twelve ALP-NET policy recommendations. Data should indeed be collected in a coherent manner across the Alpine countries and the CH/EU observatory, EUROSTAT and the Member States should co-operate in this exercise. Rolling road is seen as an intermediate solution but certainly not as the best long term solution. Currently rail is not a good alternative to road but the EU is working on this problem with the creation of legislation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> railway packages. The European Commission has noted the relevance of short sea shipping on some routes and is working on the "Motorways of the Sea". A general limit for road transport across the Alps is very difficult to implement in a non-discriminatory manner but in general it is quite clear that several policy instruments need be combined to solve the problems at hand. It may be regrettable that the framework directive on pricing does not incorporate all the ideas presented in the Green and White Papers but the Commission does not have the final say in this and such policies are always subjects to compromise. This conference should not be the end of the networking activities which could be carried on under a different framework.

## **Discussion**

**Matthew Arndt** voiced his scepticism about target oriented planning. This only works as long as targets are realistic, i.e. economically, environmentally and politically feasible. No measures can be justified at any cost and therefore the economic feasibility always remains a crucial issue. In this sense there may often not be a large gap between efficiency based planning and realistic target based planning.

For **Michel Houée** the ALP-NET recommendations on data are somewhat optimistic. To really get a clear picture of what is happening in trans-Alpine transport more data is required especially on the content of combined transport.

**Ansgar Kauf** argued that the proper sense of pricing has to be the refinancing of infrastructure within the mode from which the funds are taken. Cross subsidising different modes will not be accepted by the users. The target based approach leads to a Soviet style planning economy.

**Johann Herdina** stressed the importance of competition of rail transport on the Brenner route.

**Heike Agthe** argued that the basic rights of European citizens for healthy living conditions should have priority over the free movement of goods. This discussion about very fundamental rights and the resulting policy goals should be taken up at the European level.

**Ueli Balmer** reminded the conference to also take into consideration the East/West traffic across the Alps. Currently this has higher growth rates than the North/South transport.

## 4 Annex – List of Participants at the final ALP-NET workshop

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