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European Transport Workers' Federation  
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Federación Europea de los Trabajadores  
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## HOLISTIC MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

### Sustainable Mobility in Europe: setting the scene

#### A view on Transport from Trade Unions

by Eduardo Chagas, ETF General Secretary

Transport of goods and people plays an increasingly important role in today's markets and global economy organization. The introduction of the zero-stocks' system and just-in-time deliveries, highly depends on the good functioning of the transport chain where any disruption disturbs the whole process. This, together with the delocalisation of manufacturing to lower cost countries, have brought new vulnerable fronts for companies which they try to avoid at all costs.

"Integrators" use different transport modes, and in some companies transport is just one sector out of a wider range of activities. The liberalisation of postal services encouraged major postal operators to expand into other areas of transport. Deutsche Post WorldNet, for example, has become one of the world's biggest freight and logistics operators.

These developments benefit from EU liberalisation and deregulation policies which affect all transport sectors represented in the ETF. In the railway sector we will soon have the fourth liberalisation package; deregulation of road freight is being actively pursued in an attempt to break trade union organisation and allow employers to use unprotected, low cost labour and in civil aviation we assist to the proliferation of low cost companies, some of which deny to their workers basic rights as the freedom of association and collective bargaining, while further liberalisation is obsessively pursued in ground handling. We can also see it in maritime transport, where seafarers are excluded from most of the European social legislation and EU workers are discriminated on basis of their country of origin. The port sector despite the high degree of liberalisation is still in the Commission's plans for intervention, aiming in particular at weakening the



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trade union strength, seen all over as a barrier to the full completion of the internal market...

While the Commission uses the argument that liberalisation will end monopolies and provide better and cheaper services for users, in many cases we assist to the replacement of state monopolies by oligopolies with substantial job losses, increase in prices for the final users, decrease in the quality and quantity of the services delivered and additional burden for the national budgets as a consequence.

Collective passenger transport develops from a classical public service into an industry in which private companies aim at generating profits, cherry picking those lines and services which guarantee the fastest return for their investments.

The European Commission's first White Paper on the future of the common transport policy was issued in 1992 and mainly aimed at an opening of the transport market. The second White Paper, published in September 2001, stressed the need to develop transport in a sustainable way and therefore focused on a modal shift from road to rail, sea, and inland waterways. Amongst other, it proposed to further liberalize the railway sector, thus making rail cheaper and therefore more attractive to customers, in the Commission's words. However, the ETF focuses on more cooperation instead of more competition. By exacerbating inter-modal competition, the Commission turns its back on a policy of complementarity between transport modes, which is the only possible way to re-balance road and other modes of transport while allowing for social, environmental and technical aspects to be duly taken into consideration. With its mid-term review of the 2001 White Paper, the Commission abandoned in practice its objective of promoting the modal shift, and although its discourse referred to cooperation, the idea behind was basically of "leaving to the market to rule and find the solutions". Under the argument of boosting competitiveness, the Commission just forces competition. With the last White Paper, adopted in March 2011, the Commission identifies a number of critical issues to be addressed in the course of the next decades but where we can sense concrete measures, these concern further liberalisation of transport whilst the urgent measures that are required to revert transport's influence on climate are much more of a wishful thinking nature, not least given the long term goals it sets.

The emergence of the logistics sector fits well in the frame I referred to above, with major multinational companies which deliver integrated

services, operating across the traditional sector boundaries between air, sea, road and rail transport as well as providing ancillary services, such as warehousing.

At the same time we have been witnessing in the last decade or so, a fast change in the way financial markets operate. The increasing intervention of pension funds and private equity funds in the capital of many companies and in particular transport companies has had a devastating effect with significant job losses, restructuring and mergers.

Anticipating change and managing change is therefore a major challenge for transport unions. The ETF response has been clear: more knowledge on European policies, more strategic thinking, more pro-action, more working together.

It is with this in mind that the ETF has been working since 2006 in different projects that intend to build our own vision and strategy for dealing with the impact that transport has been playing in climate change. Our approach has been clear: more of the same is not possible. In view of a necessary socially and ecologically sustainable transport policy, we must develop concepts which will pursue sustainable objectives in the wider interests of the society, including those of employees in the transport industry. We need integrative approaches, which will create a fair, balanced and sustainable transport system.

Between 2006 and 2008 we have run an 18 months EU funded project called TRUST – Trade Union Vision on Sustainable Transport, which aimed at, on the one side, promoting a better understanding and cooperation amongst transport workers from all transport modes and on the other, to develop a trade union vision of sustainable transport which, contrary to other positions on the matter, integrated the necessary social dimension perspective in the core of the discussions on transport policies.

The outcome of this project is reflected in the brochure available in the room and we consider it is still up to date, given that the current policies still lack the adequate responses to revert the negative impact of transportation on climate. It was also the basis for an extensive resolution on Sustainable transport adopted at our 2009 Congress, in which the ETF recognizes the shared responsibility of the transport sector for climate change, and the need and the interest of the transport industry and the trade unions to support a sustainable transport system in Europe and worldwide. We

underline, however, that environmental and social sustainability are two sides of the same coin and cannot be separated.

In the resolution the ETF commits to address the need for a sustainable transport system in Europe with the European employers' organisations and to put "sustainable transport" on the agenda of the sectoral social dialogue committees.

The ETF Congress resolution also demands the creation of an Environmental and Social Observatory for transport, which would act as a kind of watchdog regarding sustainability targets and make proposals when reaching the objectives fails.

Another project followed where we tried to go deeper on the discussion of solutions for reducing the impact of transport on climate change. With the TRANSUNION project which run between 2010 and 2012 we have involved all the ETF sections in the debate on possible responses to that challenge, again reaffirming the will from trade unions to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

Competition between different modes of transport should never affect the cooperation and solidarity between transport workers and their trade unions and the ETF plays a major role in integrating different points of view and coming to joint positions.

The TRANSUNION project focused in particular on the environmental pillar of the three pillars of sustainable development. It suggests that a consequent and ambitious climate change policy can create millions of direct jobs within the transport industry and additional millions of indirect jobs. Those jobs would be mainly created in public transportation and infrastructure. In our view these jobs will be mainly generated in the public sector. In concrete situations, a social impact assessment and measures for just transition will be needed during the transition period, also addressing possible job losses or need for reconversion.

The ETF is of the opinion that a consequent and ambitious climate change policy, which is able to fulfill the reduction targets for greenhouse gasses and energy consumption on the one hand and creates new direct and indirect jobs in the transport industry on the other, needs a strong political will of European, national, regional and local decision makers. It needs massive public investment in sustainable transport modes and infrastructure. The current austerity policies are detrimental to those policy

objectives and in addition to leading Europe into a further recession with more unemployment, they risk jeopardising the targets set by the Commission in the White Paper published last year.

Entering more specifically into the different transport sectors, a EU climate change policy should be based on the principles of REDUCING, SHIFTING, IMPROVING and ELECTRIFYING. Reducing unnecessary or senseless transport, shifting towards more sustainable transport modes, improving the environmental performance of the different transport sectors in terms of technology, organisation and behaviour, electrifying transport means. For each transport mode there is a different weighing of these four elements of climate change policy. This would be subject to social dialogue and the project also provided some ideas we want to raise with the European employers' organisations.

European transport trade unions are committed to cooperate with employers' organisations and the institutions in building solutions that lead to sustainable transport systems, promote cooperation rather competition between transport modes and preserve quality employment.

The current liberalisation and privatisation policies must also come to an end in the transport sector. They have been responsible for many more job losses than the crisis may have created. The obsession in putting an end to public monopolies has often given place to private monopolistic structures. Sustainable transport concepts must be further developed on the EU level and on the national level of the member states by appropriate rules, and the necessary means must be made available for R&D in sustainable transport concepts and not least for the development of the necessary infrastructure. The development and implementation of an ecologically and socially sustainable transport concept will only be successful, when the true costs of all transport modes will be duly taken into account.

As in freight transport, urban and long-distance public passenger transport systems must be given their properly developed and necessary public infrastructure, which must be realised by appropriate public policies. Collective transport systems have to be given priority. Unrestricted and barrier-free mobility is a necessary prerequisite for the participation of people in social and public life. This means that quality and affordable public transport must be accessible for all. The supply of public transport services must therefore be continuously developed and adapted to the needs of the people concerned; their opportunities to use such systems must be ensured by the adoption of appropriate social tariffs. Funding of

urban public transport must be guaranteed by the sufficient provision of public funding and local rates. Generally, a reasonable integrated transport concept means that public transport must be harmonised with all types of individual passenger transport to provide a well-functioning and balanced overall concept.

It should be recalled that the potential for growth in the transport sector which had been identified before the crisis hit Europe, is still valid. Estimates were pointing to a growth in air transport of more than 100% by 2020 or more than 50% for road transport.

It is interesting to note that as a result of the current crisis and the long lasting debate on transport and climate change, some manufacturers are abandoning global supply chains for regional ones, with some big companies moving their businesses from Asia back home in Western Europe or to Eastern Europe.

Special attention must be paid in our work to women transport workers, whose participation in the industry is very likely to grow considerably in the future. Persisting gender segregation and discrimination practices, equal pay, health and safety, work-life balance are issues for which we must look for solutions both at European and national level, starting with the trade union movement.

Only if and when workers and their organisations realise the importance of European and national developments on their everyday life, and only when they realise that those developments are not a fatality, but instead they can contribute to changes, it will be possible to conduct European and worldwide actions successfully.