

7th July 2011, Bruxelles

European Commission launch the new ENP transport plan

Today, the European Commission has published a new action plan to strengthen transport links with neighboring regions to the East and South of the European Union.

The plan contains more than twenty specific measures, differentiated between short and long term, to make the transports easier, safer and reliable. At the same time, it will intensify the integration between the European market and the neighboring areas. This will result in economic benefits for both parties and, in particular, will facilitate the development of backward areas. The improvement of economic conditions will then have a positive impact on the political life of the Union's neighboring countries, increasing their stability.

The project covers the whole European transport sector: aviation, rail, road transport, maritime and inland navigation. The Commission supports the implementation of communication networks through the projects of TEN-T agency and, more generally, of all necessary infrastructure for the proper functioning of the various types of transport.

For road transport sector, concerning the opening of the market at hauliers from third countries, the forces that tended to unbridled liberalization of the sector were rejected in favor of a more cautious and gradual approach. Commission will proceed first with a feasibility study, to assess the impact of market liberalization. The process, necessary to overcome a phase characterized by bilateral agreements that have little to do with the definition of a United Europe, will take place in a gradual and controlled way. Commission must ensure that neighboring countries will implement both legislation and controls. In particular, Commission will apply in order to promote the adoption of digital tachographs and make it mandatory. This, together with appropriate enforcement actions, will ensure compliance with driving times and rest periods. The opening has to be controlled, in order to be able to enforce common rules and establish an effective competitive market.

The Commission also proposes to strengthen cooperation with Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine in order to facilitate the crossing of borders. It's important to note that 40% of the travel time of a carrier is lost to customs controls. The simplification of procedures will therefore reduce costs and transport times.

With regard to passenger transport, the Commission proposes, in the long term, to expand the scope of the Interbus Agreement to include the international carriage of passengers by buses and extend it to countries involved in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).