

TRANSPORT SECTOR POTENTIAL TO CREATE 10 MILLION NEW JOBS

by Michael Scheerer, CEND

The transport sector is at the heart of the Commission's agenda for jobs and growth. Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc tells *Commission en direct* why.

How can the transport sector contribute to the Commission's ten priorities that President Juncker reiterated in his State of the Union speech?

Transport delivers on many of the Commission's priorities. Let me give you four examples. First, under the Connecting Europe Facility, the Commission will invest €26 billion in the transport sector to bridge Europe's investment gap and kick-start growth and job creation. Recently, the Commission published the results of an external study, which showed that completing the trans-European transport network could create up to 10 million jobs. Second, decarbonising transport will lower energy demand and mitigate climate change, in line with the Energy Union's objectives. Third, innovative transport solutions will fuel the creation of a Digital Single Market. Fourth, strengthening the sector's competitiveness will reinforce the position of the EU as a global actor. This in turn will create new jobs, and investment opportunities and enable more growth.

What is your vision of European transport?

Transport is about people. It therefore has to be affordable, reliable, and easily accessible. This requires the creation of a competitive and sustainable European transport system. First, we are removing the remaining technical and administrative barriers to ensure that transport services can reap the full benefits of the internal market. Second, more Intelligent Transport Systems can improve the level of services, for example, through integrated ticketing or multi-modal journey planners. Third, transport's dependence on oil has to be overcome through a higher share of renewables and alternative fuels. Fourth, European transport has to be the most competitive worldwide.



By the end of this year, the Commission will present a new aviation package. The aim is to take a holistic approach to the aviation value network and help shape a comprehensive strategy for Europe. The Commission's ambition is to strengthen the EU air transport value network in order to make it competitive and ensure sustainable growth. Europe must once again become a leading player in international aviation and a global model for sustainable aviation, with a high level of service and ambitious EU standards.

Another important milestone will be the launch of the Connecting Europe Facility's second call, with around €8 billion to finance transport projects, mostly in the cohesion states.

How do you plan to remove the remaining administrative and technical barriers?

We already have a lot of the legislation in place, but we also need to ensure it is implemented correctly. In the rail sector, there are currently over 11,000 national rules in force. In 2013, the Commission proposed to streamline this regime by strengthening the European Rail Agency. We will continue to work with the two co-legislators on this file.

In aviation, we are also looking at improving existing legislation in line with the Commission's Better Regulation Agenda. For example, the current regulatory safety system has so far been effective in delivering a high level of protection. It is, however, probably not the most efficient, which creates unnecessary costs. Inefficiencies stem from the institutional and regulatory complexity, as well as the EU's inability to develop a comprehensive picture of the risks affecting its aviation sector. We are looking to address this as part of the aviation package. This can be achieved by introducing a more proportionate regulatory framework and eliminating regulation that stifles innovation and competitiveness with overly prescriptive requirements.

In view of the upcoming UN climate change conference in Paris, how will Europe meet environmental targets for transport?

Transport accounts for 24% of all greenhouse gas emissions and for 32% of all energy used in Europe. Decarbonisation is, therefore, both a matter of sustainability and security of energy supply. Decarbonisation and electrification of transport are two of my priorities during my mandate. The necessary infrastructure for cleaner power for transport must be rolled out at European level. It will push the automotive industry to adjust through alternative fuels and efficiency gains. We also have to enable a shift towards the least polluting modes of transport – rail and inland waterways – where missing links and bottlenecks must be addressed.

How does transport fit into the digital agenda? What are your views on Uber?

Information and communication technologies can have many applications in the field of transport and their use could bring significant benefits to users, citizens, and companies. So my team and I are committed to deploying at European level Intelligent Transport Systems, such as the dynamic rail signalling and management system ERTMS. On Uber, I support the development of new mobility services, as they have the potential to create growth and employment through innovative business models. They have, however, to contribute to the EU social agenda and to national tax law. We need a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges these services bring. DG MOVE will shortly launch a study on markets for taxis and hire cars with driver. This will provide the necessary background for the Commission to decide on the need for – and possible character of – any further action at EU level.

Following August's failed Thalys attack, what can the Commission do?

Immediately after the attack, I asked the Expert Group on Land Transport Security – which is composed of representatives from the Commission, Member States and the industry – to discuss current best practices in rail security and if additional measures could or should be taken at EU level. The group met in mid-September and its conclusions will be brought to the attention of Transport Ministers who meet in October. The use of CCTV (closed-circuit television) or better training of train staff are possible options. But I believe that any new measure should be proportional and focused on the threat. Public transport ought to remain accessible, open, and competitive. ■

DG MOVE – Transport themes

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Commissioner Violeta Bulc's website

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