

Transport *can* drive climate change reductions



Seminar report

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T&E 01/1, Transport *can* drive climate change reductions: Seminar report”

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Summary and Recommendations

Transport's CO₂ emissions are among the fastest rising of all sectors. There is no one simple and single solution which will solve the transport and climate change problem.

We therefore need to look for a package of measures. We recommend that at least the following be included in the package:

- i. Existing transport and environment legislation needs to be implemented as soon as possible, including such related legislation as air quality directives;
- ii. New technology is important and should be promoted, though not at the expense of other approaches;
- iii. Decoupling of transport and economic growth has to be a priority: without this, Europe will never meet its Kyoto commitments;
- iv. The transport sector needs concrete targets for reductions. If this is not done, emissions reductions from other sectors will be jeopardised;
- v. A modal shift is needed, away from the more damaging to the less damaging modes of transport: conventional rail and public transport should be prioritised and given adequate levels of funding to ensure this;
- vi. There is a strong link between walking/cycling and health: this link needs to be consistently made in policy making;
- vii. Make the EU-ACEA¹ voluntary agreement on CO₂ reduction from cars binding and move beyond the agreed target;
- viii. Develop tougher fuel standards – the move towards eliminating sulphur from fuels is a good example;
- ix. Behaviour change in individual consumers is crucial if transport's CO₂ emissions are to be reduced substantially. There therefore needs to be a strong emphasis on demand management.

¹ ACEA is the European auto-manufacturers' association

1. Introduction

1.1 Setting the scene

Every year, T&E uses the opportunity of its annual general assembly meeting to organise a seminar on an important topic in the transport and environment debate.

This year's seminar specifically focused on transport and climate change and was called 'Transport *can* drive climate change reductions'. The timing could not have been better, since around the same time the US president bluntly announced the retreat of the US from the Kyoto game. The United States is the biggest contributor to climate change and has the highest per capita emissions in transport.

Transport is typically the least understood and studied sector when it comes to climate change. Unfortunately, it is also the sector with the highest growth in emissions.

The seminar's objective was to show that it is not enough for Europe to look at which sector can reduce its emissions cheapest and then propose that emissions reductions focus on this / those sectors.

Given the strong growth in transport's emissions – but also its as-yet insufficiently explored potential for emissions reductions – it is particularly relevant that this sector's emissions be brought down.

1.2 The T&E network

The T&E network is unique, because it focuses on transport issues; thus covering all aspects of transport, environment and related policies. Some two thirds of its work is European and national while about one third is international. Members include a broad range of environmental groups around Europe which have a transport dimension or focus in their work. Associate members are those groups which support T&E activities generally without being a full voting member.

The time of the annual general assembly is an important opportunity for the network to get together to discuss important topics in transport and environment and for the national NGOs to exchange views with Commission and Brussels-based actors.

The topic of transport and climate change is of great relevance to most organisations working on transport and environment, and proved a popular topic for T&E members.

1.3 Transport and climate change

Transport's impacts on us and our environment are wide-ranging: they are not only environmental, but also economical since our transport system is both economically and environmentally inefficient. Environmental effects include at least air pollution, acidification and climate change; while economic inefficiencies include at least direct and indirect subsidies and important external costs (e.g. crashes, congestion and health costs).

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges that we as humans are facing today. And transport contributes a very large share to the greenhouse gas emissions which are responsible for climate change.

2. Expert presentations

Magnus Nilsson, from Swedish T&E Member Svenska Naturskyddsföreningen, chaired the morning session, which comprised four presentations.

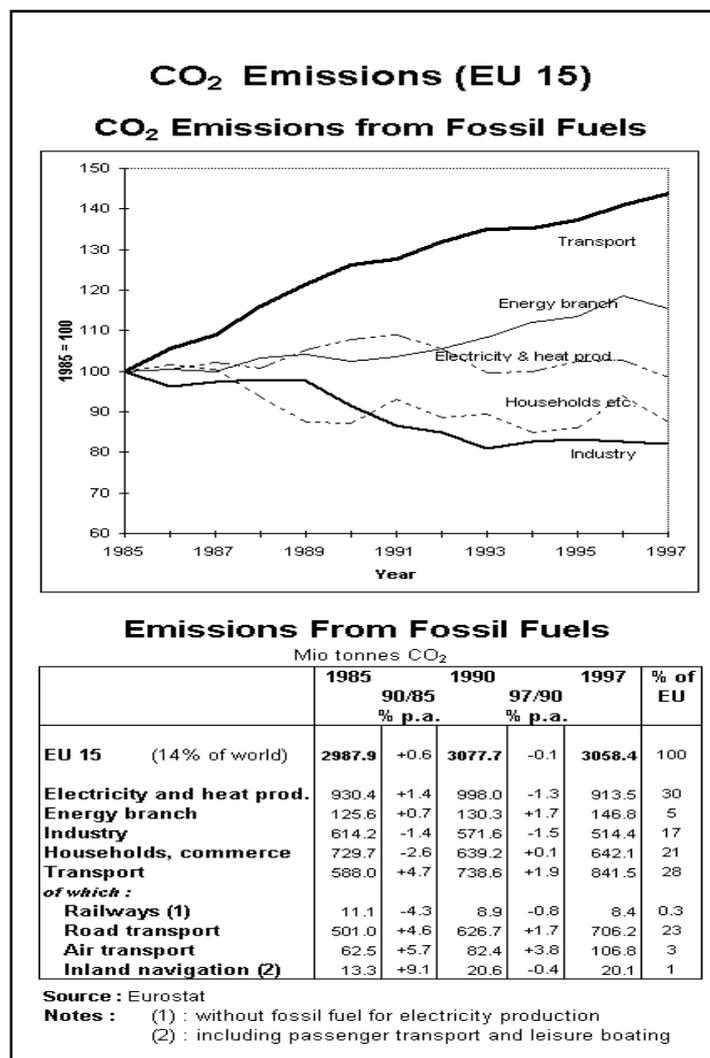
2.1. Challenges and developments in international climate and transport policies

This presentation set the scene for what was to follow, describing in particular the international context in which transport and climate change is situated.

Beatrice Schell, T&E Director

2.1.1 The international setting

The Kyoto Protocol, signed in December 1997 by some 160 countries under the



United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change stipulates that developed nations should reduce their emissions of the six most important greenhouse gases by 5% by 2008-2012. The protocol does not say in which sectors and by which means these countries should achieve their reductions, while proposing a number of possibilities, including national measures and flexible economic instruments such as emissions trading.

The aviation and maritime sectors are specifically mentioned, but only to say their international emissions will be dealt with separately². This also means that a large part of transport's emissions – of which aviation has the fastest growing share – are not presently included in the targets for emissions reductions.

² Article 2.2 of the Protocol says that, "The Parties should limit or reduce their emissions working through the International Civil Aviation Organisation [ICAO] and the International Maritime Organisation [IMO]."

ICAO and IMO both have the responsibility to find the necessary instrument to tackle emissions from aviation as well as decide how these sectors can contribute to the overall target.

| | 1990 Emissions | 2010 Baseline | 2010 Baseline with ACEA agreement | Change 1990-2010 | Change 1990-2010 with ACEA agreement |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Mt CO ₂ | Mt CO ₂ | Mt CO ₂ | % change | % change |
| TOTAL passenger | 500 | 683 | 608 | 37% | 22% |
| TOTAL freight | 233 | 310 | 310 | 33% | 33% |
| TOTAL (all) | 734 | 993 | 918 | 35% | 25% |

Transport accounts for 28% of total CO₂ emissions. It is particularly important to note that 90% of the expected increase in CO₂ between 1990 and 2010 will be attributable to the transport sector. Road transport is particularly to blame, since it generates 85% of CO₂ emissions from the transport sector.

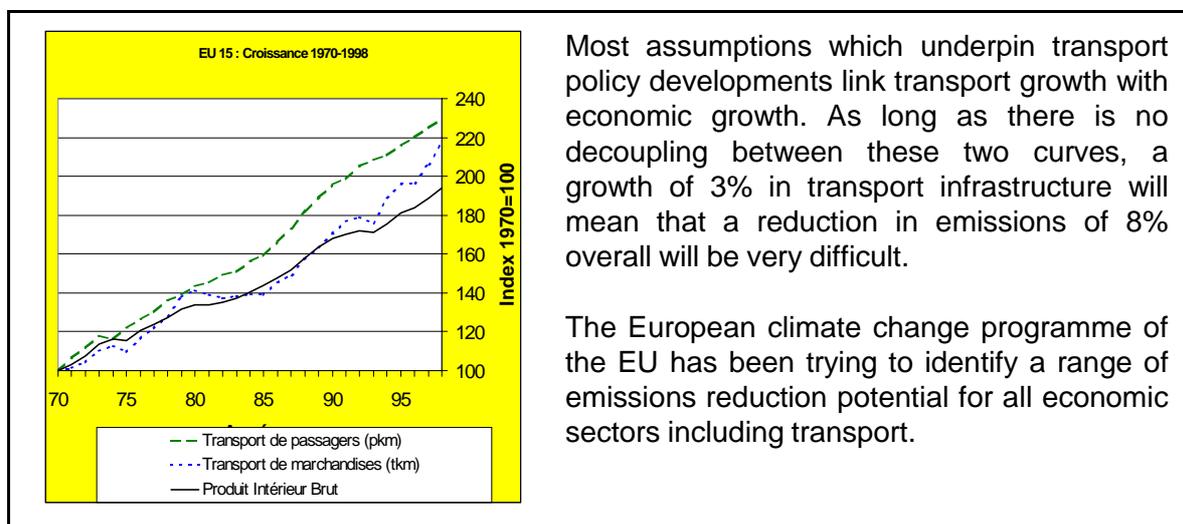
“Compliance with the Kyoto commitments and control of greenhouse gas emissions in general are essentially a matter of energy and transport policy” (DG TREN). Without drastic measures in the transport sector in particular, climate change can not be effectively countered.

2.1.2 The European context

The Common Transport Policy, currently being drafted in the Commission services, will decide on the direction of European transport policy for the next ten years.

Trying to reduce their emissions by 8% between 2008 and 2012 is the single biggest international commitment that the Union and its member states have signed on to.

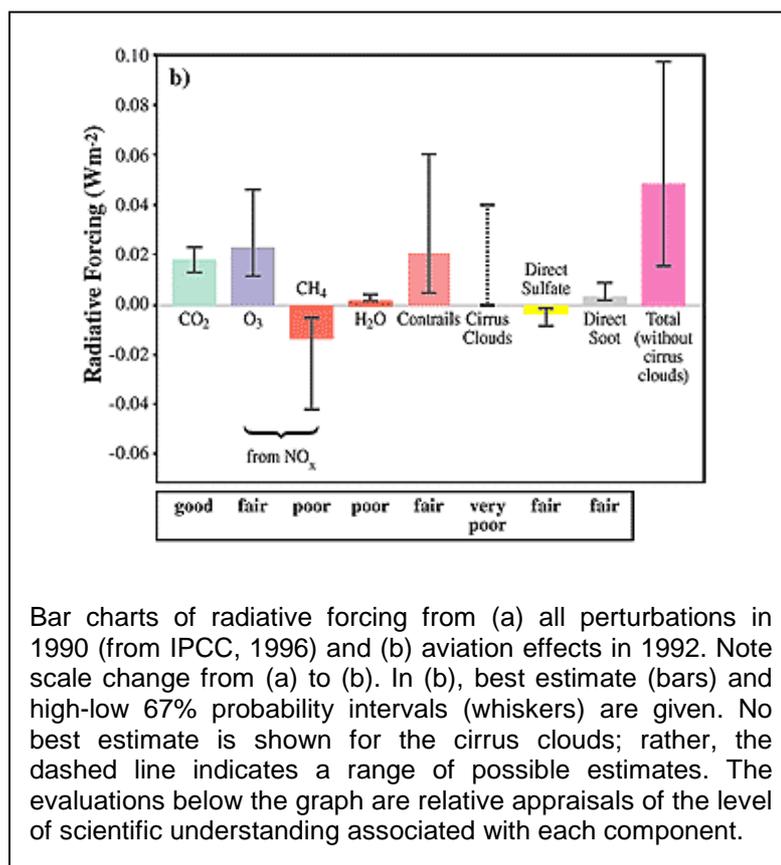
Furthermore, the Amsterdam treaty requires all EU policies, including transport to take into account these environmental commitments. It seems clear in light of the strong growth of this sector that “business as usual” is not an option. The contribution of the transport sector will to a large extent determine whether or not the EU’s Kyoto commitments can be fulfilled.



Most assumptions which underpin transport policy developments link transport growth with economic growth. As long as there is no decoupling between these two curves, a growth of 3% in transport infrastructure will mean that a reduction in emissions of 8% overall will be very difficult.

The European climate change programme of the EU has been trying to identify a range of emissions reduction potential for all economic sectors including transport.

are decoupled. The measures proposed so far however, do not seem to have the right potential. Estimates vary greatly in their nature, for example there are some 'top down' estimates of potential savings from taxation or driver training, contrasting with 'bottom up' estimates based on specific projects or programmes. Some are based on national or even local studies, which may not be applicable (or at least not to the same extent) elsewhere in the Community. The results presented are a mixture of non-quantified indications of benefits, broad-brush estimates of the possible scale of effects, and a few more specific estimates of potential based on monitoring or modelling, and with a more or less detailed research basis.



Some figures on aviation

Aviation emissions are currently 3,5 % of total emissions – more than the UK as a whole; and they could be higher than 15% by 2050 if nothing is done, due to strong growth. Total radiative forcing is 2 to 4 times that of CO₂ alone. Technological improvements are not sufficient, according to the IPCC special report.

Measures envisaged in CAEP's ICAO would only limit emissions, not reduce them.

2.2 What policies and measures for European Transport?

A presentation on possibilities for action on transport and climate change at the European-level

*Günter Hörmandinger, European Commission, DG Environment (ENV)
Franz Söldner, European Commission, DG Energy and Transport (TREN)*

Both speakers focused on general observations about the issue of transport and climate change before giving a comprehensive view of the situation to date. The most salient points are mentioned below.

It is worth pointing out that road transport is constantly growing. For example, the total quantity of goods transported by road in the EU rose from 2.365.9 million tonnes to 2.658.5 million tonnes between 1996 and 1998. Over the same period, the volume of goods sent by rail actually decreased: 221 million tonnes to 216.9 million.

At the same time, CO₂ emissions from road transport continue to grow, despite the fact that individual vehicles are becoming less polluting, and emissions of pollutants such as NO_x are falling. This is because of ever-increasing transport demand.

One of the most obvious impacts of transport is its influence on **climate change**. However, this is not the easiest argument to motivate action. Environmentalists should therefore seek synergies with other (environmental) benefits and avoid the problem of sub-optimisation, by not addressing climate change exclusively. This would be more useful and effective.

Climate change must form an integral part of the strategy for integrating the environment into transport policy making: it therefore needs objectives and targets, indicators and a clear review process.

As a whole, the environmental effects of transport can be addressed in two ways: **less transport** and/ or **better transport**.

When addressing the need for less transport we should note that transport is not only a "derived demand," originating in other sectors. Transport demand management should form part of the transport policy; for example by including strategies for infrastructure provision, pricing and local actions (like parking policy or transport planning). To a certain extent we can see transport demand as a result of transport impact assessment of other policy actions, and thus a result of the whole policy mechanism, rather than a result of simple demand.

Transport and climate change is also an issue of **subsidiarity** (as for example energy and CO₂ taxation, speed limits, speed limiters, land use planning or traffic planning), and this should be dealt with by the appropriate national or regional instances.

European policy can promote the exchange of good practice and experience and organise such conferences as the ones planned for late 2001 or early 2002 – these would allow better communication between all the stakeholders involved.

2.3 National policies – on track to achieve their goals?

Presentation on different options open to national governments to combat transport's CO₂ emissions.

Malcolm Fergusson, Institute for European Environmental Policy

There are three main options open to national governments wishing to reduce transport's greenhouse gas emissions: **taxation** of fuels and vehicles to discourage emissions; **incentives** to promote the use of best available technology; and **other measures**, such as labelling and public information, which together are thought to encourage behaviour change in the general population's transport use. So far these options have not yielded the emissions cuts which are needed.

2.3.1 Taxing fuel

Governments across Europe have tried to reduce fuel consumption by placing variable taxes on its purchase: Germany presently has a fuel tax escalator in place³ (2000-2003) and offers tax incentives in the form of lower fuel tax to people buying ultra-low sulphur fuel. Italy was at the time of speaking struggling to continue its fuel tax escalator, which was planned to run from 1999 to 2005. And Sweden has a policy of year-on-year diesel price increases.

Yet the level of tax on both petrol and diesel varies widely across the EU, leading to consumers paying different prices at the pump. This has in turn led to fuel tourism (crossing the border to buy cheaper fuel) and feelings of relative deprivation (see the fuel price protests, below).

The UK has adopted a number of instruments. These include the now-famous fuel tax escalator, increasing diesel rates, and offering incentives on ultra-low-sulphur petrol and diesel. The government initially announced the fuel tax escalator as an environmental tax – but popular opposition grew partly because it was seen as purely a revenue-gathering device (see below).

2.3.2 Vehicle taxation

Another method to encourage emissions reductions is a differentiated tax on vehicles; both purchase- and annual- taxes. The disadvantage of once-off or once-per-year taxes is that once the fee is paid, the consumer can feel free to drive as much as desired without further penalty: indeed, the higher the initial fee, the more motorists need to drive before 'recouping' the fee.

Purchase taxes on vehicles can be imposed by engine capacity (as is the case in Belgium, Spain, Greece, Ireland and Portugal) or by fuel consumption, as in Austria.

Annual taxes can be differentiated by a wide variety of elements: by engine power (Belgium, Spain, Greece, France, Italy); by engine size (Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Austria and Portugal); by fuel consumption (Denmark); by weight (Netherlands, Finland, Sweden); or by CO₂ emissions (UK). All EU countries charge an annual vehicle tax. Again, this is more for revenue-raising purposes than for

³ A fuel tax escalator is a mechanism whereby the tax on fuel is raised in a way that makes fuel increasingly expensive in real terms each year.

environmental reasons, though a differentiated tax on environmental grounds can bring some benefits.

2.3.3 Other incentives for low-CO₂ cars

Two incentive schemes are worth mentioning: better vehicles and alternative fuels.

Some countries – notably Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and Denmark – have introduced incentives for the purchase of environmentally enhanced vehicles. Germany, for example, gave tax breaks for purchase of the 5-litre car before 2000 and is presently supporting the 3-litre car in a similar fashion⁴.

Italy and the Netherlands have long provided support for alternative fuels (such as bio-fuel), a scheme which other countries are now following.

2.3.4 The autumn of discontent: Fuel protests in the UK

The fuel price protests which rocked Europe in 2000 were perhaps nowhere as bad as in the UK, where farmers, fishers, truckers and rural motorists joined forces to protest the high level of fuel-prices, which rose with the price of oil and reflected the initially high rate of fuel duty charged there.

The issues raised by the protesters were the oil price and the tax on fuel at the pump, which were together seen to be squeezing the motorist. Hauliers complained that their competitiveness was being compromised, as fuel taxes on continental Europe – and therefore the price of fuel at the pump – were lower. Some commentators were also worried about the economy's dependency on oil. It is worth noting that the fuel price protests took place against a backdrop of the collapse of the Kyoto talks in the Hague; but very few people made the connection between climate change and their use of fuel.

The UK government gave in to the protesters, but reduced duty on only the less environmentally damaging, ultra-low sulphur, fuels (petrol and diesel). It also reduced the vehicle excise duty on trucks and launched a green fuels challenge⁵. Other continental mainland governments, such as France and the Netherlands, followed suit and introduced fuel duty concessions to truckers.

2.3.5 How is Europe meeting its CO₂ challenge?

The UK is on track to meet its overall emissions-reduction target under the Kyoto agreement, but the cuts made to date would be expensive and politically difficult to repeat. So the remaining emissions cuts the UK needs to make will need to come from other areas. Transport has yet to contribute to the UK's emissions reductions; in fact, CO₂ emissions from the transport sector are rising rather than falling, threatening the overall success in meeting the target by 2008-2112. The same is true in other EU member-states.

⁴ Note: 5l and 3l cars do not have enormous engines; rather they have good fuel economy; allowing them to run for 100km with 5 litres and 3 litres of fuel respectively.

⁵ This is a strategy of encouraging the development and propagation of the least environmentally damaging fuels presently available, like liquid propelled gas, compressed natural gas and biofuels; as well as vehicles using these fuels – such as hybrid or hydrogen-powered vehicles.

Unless transport emissions can be reduced across the EU, the Union as a whole is in grave danger of failing to meet its Kyoto target of an 8% reduction by the 2008-2012 first commitment period. The fuel price protests in the UK and elsewhere in Europe show that crude financial incentives to reduce individual consumption through economic means can result in widespread protest and a reversal of the policies. And the measures which are presently being used by governments to reduce transport emissions are just as clearly failing to reduce transport's emissions.

We need clear measures to change people's behaviour, and these cannot be implemented until some firmly-held beliefs change, notably that investment in infrastructure will always lead to economic growth, and that therefore an increase in motorised transport is good for the economy and therefore increases general welfare.

3. Panel discussion: the main themes

Five broad themes emerged from the lively panel discussion.

3.1 Advanced technology is not the solution

The EU has introduced standards for vehicles and fuels since the 1970s which, together with improvements in engine technology, make individual vehicles almost unrecognisably cleaner. However, road CO₂ emissions keep increasing. Companies are on the verge of making the next break-through in fuel-efficient and alternative fuel vehicles. Yet we should not pin our hopes on technological solutions. They can help reduce the problem, but cannot alone make transport meet its responsibilities: for that, the framework within which transport operates must change.

3.2 Decoupling

A doubt was expressed as to whether or not we had managed to decouple the energy sector from the economy, as is received wisdom, or whether energy-intensive industries have simply been exported elsewhere. It was pointed out that transport problems are far less easy to export elsewhere, and that decoupling of the transport and the economy was an absolute prerequisite for reducing the negative effects of transport, including its CO₂ burden.

3.3 The role of awareness-raising

It was generally agreed that individual behaviour change is crucial in reducing transport's CO₂ emissions, particularly from road transport; though there was some disagreement as to how best to affect this change. The importance of awareness raising, and the work of the European Climate Change Programme, was mentioned in this context⁶.

3.4 The special case of aviation

Aviation is growing very rapidly, and its emissions are not covered by the Kyoto Protocol. It is therefore a *special* case which needs *special* measures to deal with it. There was general agreement that the market benefits which aviation enjoys, such as not paying fuel duty on kerosene, should be eliminated, and that action to curb its emissions growth in Europe should be taken largely at the international level, though Europe should be prepared to take unilateral action if necessary.

3.5 A comprehensive approach is needed

This was perhaps the dominant theme of the discussion: that any approach which is to be successful in combating climate change will need to look at the transport system in its entirety and deal with the other impacts of transport. In other words, only an integrated strategy will work to solve the complex problem of transport's present unsustainability.

⁶ The ECCP was launched in the second half of 2000. One of its main aims is to identify policies and measures to allow reductions from various economic sectors, including transport.

4. Conclusion: the way forward

The seminar was a forum for lively debate and real exchange of views on the subject of transport and climate change.

It became clear through the course of the seminar that Europe's decision-makers need to take account of the evidence emerging from the broad scientific community when developing transport legislation and when contemplating new infrastructure projects. Failure to do so will reinforce transport's present highly unsustainable patterns, not to mention undermine the goals of European cohesion and integration.

Transport's CO₂ emissions are among the fastest rising of all sectors. Decision-makers and policy proposals often encourage technological solutions, but these are insufficient to solve the problem.

Instead, combating transport's contribution to climate change needs a comprehensive approach. Transport and climate change is not a simple problem, and a simple solution will not work. As a result, policymakers need to work to develop a new framework for transport in Europe.

We therefore need to look for a package of measures.

Such a package could include: implementing existing transport and environment legislation as soon as possible; promoting new technology where appropriate; decoupling transport and the economy; setting concrete targets for emissions reductions; encouraging a modal shift towards the least polluting transport modes – in both freight and passenger transport; making the link between walking, cycling and health; making targets set out in voluntary agreements legally binding; develop stronger fuel standards and encourage individual behaviour change. This latter can be done in numerous ways and could be the subject of a seminar in itself.

The transport sector can and must play a far bigger role in greenhouse gas emissions reductions in Europe.

Transport *can* drive climate change reductions

09h00: Welcome

- **Matthias Zimmermann**, T&E President

Magnus Nilsson, T&E Board member, will chair the morning session

09h10: Challenges and developments in international climate and transport policies

- **Beatrice Schell**, T&E Director: 09h10-09h30
- **Discussion**: 09h30-10h00

10h00: What policies and measures for European transport?

- **Günter Hörmandinger**: 10h00-10h15
(European Commission, DG Environment)
- **Franz Söldner**: 10h15-10h30
(European Commission, DG TREN, transport & energy)
- **Discussion**: 10h30-10h50

10h50: Coffee break

11h10: National policies - On track to achieve their goals?

- **Malcolm Fergusson**: 11h10-11h30
Institute for European Environmental Policy
- **Discussion**: 11h30-12h00

12h00: Lunch break

13h00: Interactive panel discussion

Discussion will be chaired by **Frazer Goodwin**, T&E Policy Officer

Panellists include:

- **Ursula Vavrik**, European Commission, DG ENV
- **Günter Hörmandinger**, European Commission, DG ENV
- **Karla Schoeters**, Climate Network Europe
- **Roger Torode**, UITP
- **Malcolm Fergusson**, Institute for European Environmental Policy
- **Jørgen Henningsen**, European Commission, DG TREN
- **Stephan Singer**, WWF

Note: In the event, Ursula Vavrik and Stephan Singer were replaced on the panel by Franz Söldner

15h00: Closing



ANNEX II

List of participants

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57 people registered in advance for the conference: they are listed above. In addition, some people attended the conference without advance registration.

T&E PUBLICATIONS

1996

- T&E 96/1 Roads and Economy. State-of-the-art report (€30)
- T&E 96/3 Response to the European Commission's Green Paper "Towards Fair and Efficient Pricing in Transport"
- T&E 96/4 Emissions from 36 car models - test results from cars subjected to heavy loads and a supplementary test cycle
- T&E 96/5 Car Rating in Europe - Report from the seminar "Environmental and Safety Rating of Cars"
- T&E 96/6 Roads and Economy - summary and recommendations
- T&E 96/7 The Greening of Freight Transport in Sweden - Preliminary report of the project "The Greening of Freight Transport"
- T&E 96/8 Principles of Fair and Efficient Pricing - a political response to the European Commission's green paper
- T&E 96/9 Air Pollution from Sea Vessels - the need and potential for reductions
- T&E 96/10 The Greening of Freight Transport in Norway - Background report of the project "The Greening to the project The Greening of Freight Transport"
- T&E 96/11 The Greening of Freight Transport in Germany - Background report of the project "The Greening to the project The Greening of Freight Transport"
- T&E 96/12 The Greening of Freight Transport in Europe - final report
- T&E 96/13 Response to the European Commission's Auto-oil Proposals

1997

- T&E 97/1 Memorandum on transport and environment to the Council of Ministers and the Dutch Presidency
- T&E 97/2 Reducing Cars' Thirst for Fuel - position paper on reducing CO2 emissions from passenger cars
- T&E 97/3 Towards more sensible decision-making on infrastructure building
- T&E 97/4 Updated response to the EU's Auto-Oil Programme
- T&E 97/5 Memorandum on Transport and Environment to the Council of Ministers and the UK Presidency
- T&E 97/6 Response to the European Commission's Acidification Strategy (joint paper with EEB and Swedish NGO Secretariat on Acid Rain)
- T&E 97/7 Traffic, air pollution and health

1998

- T&E 98/1 Sustainable Aviation - The need for a European environmental aviation charge
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About this paper

Transport is responsible for a large share of Europe's contribution to global warming. Despite piecemeal attempts to reduce emissions from transport, the sector's CO₂ emissions are among the fastest-rising of all sectors of the European economy.

T&E held a seminar at the end of March 2001 on the question of transport and climate change, timed to coincide with its AGM. It drew together T&E member-organisations, experts in the field and European Commission officials working on the area. It was a forum for lively debate and real exchange of views on the subject.

Combating transport's contribution to climate change needs a comprehensive approach. Transport and climate change is not a simple problem, and a simple solution will not work. As a result, policymakers need to work to develop a new framework for transport in Europe. The transport sector can and must play a far bigger role in greenhouse gas emissions reductions in Europe.

About T&E

The European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E) is Europe's primary non-governmental organisation campaigning on a Europe-wide level for an environmentally responsible approach to transport. The Federation was founded in 1989 as a European umbrella for organisations working in this field. At present T&E has some 40 member organisations covering 21 countries. The members are mostly national organisations, including public transport users' groups, environmental organisations and the European environmental transport associations ('Verkehrsclubs'). These organisations in all have several million individual members. Several transnational organisations are associated members.

T&E closely monitors developments in European transport policy and submits responses on all major papers and proposals from the European Commission. T&E frequently publishes reports on important issues in the field of transport and the environment, and also carries out research projects.

The list of T&E publications since 1996 in the annex provides a picture of recent T&E activities.

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