

Deviation towards Climate Protection

CIPRA statements on transport

Transport, in particular by car and truck, is one of the main causes of climate change. In the Alpine countries transport accounts for more than 25 percent of the release of greenhouse gases and is of especial importance in the increase of these gases since 1990. A wrong development, running counter to the political objective to reduce exhaust emissions. In the Alps, the percentage of journeys made by car is higher than European average.

Shall we continue along this road at full throttle? The economic prognoses are based on the fact that exhaust gases from transport will affect climate even more severely in the future than today, if this is not countered. Less transport means more: better air, fewer hold-ups, more recreation value, protected climate.

CIPRA requests:

(1) Increase tax on mineral oils, stop tourism for filling

Petrol and natural gas must become evidently more expensive, in order to speed up system change to renewable energies: manufacturers begin to build smaller, lighter and less consuming vehicles; these are increasingly in demand, since customers feel every mile they drive in their pocket and want vehicles that save resources. Alpine countries must agree on a common price level for fuels, in order to stop tourism for petrol filling.

(2) Public transport, regional circles

The extra earnings through increased taxing on mineral oil must be also utilised to provide better public transport for rural border areas. Besides, regional economic circles must be promoted; if goods and wares are produced, bought and consumed in an own region, there is lower transport mileage and the climate is protected. It makes no sense to fight trends towards migration from rural areas with commuter flat rates and petrol subsidies; this would mean merely tinkering with the symptoms. It is more intelligent and sustainable to invest money in regional circles and in new and attractive jobs. This way, border areas become attractive and worth living in, in the long term also for young people.

(3) Priority for bicycles and public means of transport

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The road network is sufficient. New roads – as is proved by many surveys – generate no regional economic added value and act to the detriment of climate and the environment. Funds for traffic infrastructures must be utilised in the future mainly for the promotion of public transport and bicycles.

(4) Road Pricing for trucks

Switzerland shows the example: the imposition of charges for trucks have proved positive. They will be levied on the basis not of a lump sum but of mileage. These Road Pricing systems reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and other negative effects of heavy traffic such as accidents, respiratory illnesses and other damage to health, noise, jams, without detriment to the economy and consumers. Following the Swiss example, road fees must be introduced for trucks everywhere and for all road types in the Alps. Toll proceeds should be allocated, among other things, for climate protection measures, a shift from truck transport to rail, and noise protection.

(5) Take trucks to the stock exchange

In principle, various goods which are currently transported by trucks through Alpine land can be transported by rail. Heavy motor transport must be reduced. We need an Alpine stock exchange in order to limit the number of trucks crossing the Alps. A benefit in the allocation of trespassing rights is that journeys can be subdivided equally on various passes. Alpine crossing by trucks should be treated as a limited resource, because of its environmentally damaging consequences: demand determines price. In addition, traffic management systems must be introduced, in order to shift goods transportation from road to rail. This “deviation” which is significant also for climate protection has consequences well above and beyond the Alps, if the shift of goods to rail is generally applied over long distances.

(6) Stop at 100 speed

It has been proved that limiting speed protects climate. In the short term and without high costs it is possible to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also particulate, nitrogen oxide and noise. A maximum speed limit of 100 km/h on highways and of 80 km/h on country roads must be introduced and consistently checked. Any offences must be swiftly punished.

(7) Stop to biofuels

Biofuels are not sustainable. They are cultivated in intensive and non-natural agriculture, often accompanied with forest felling and higher food prices in the poorest regions of the earth. In various cases their production entails increased emission of greenhouse gases than what is saved with their combustion, for example in comparison to petrol.

(8) Fill cars with sun

Electric cars should only be used where mobility needs cannot be covered other than by car. In this very limited context it will be possible to generate the necessary electricity directly from sun power. The expansion of water power stations to the benefit of electrical mobility is definitely not a solution since this type of energy is limited and an uncontrolled development cannot be arranged in an environmentally sustainable way.

(9) Packages with soft mobility

Those countries that have signed the Alpine Convention must promote environmentally friendly tourism more strongly than before. Also arriving and staying in remote tourist places is possible with public transport. That environmentally friendly mobility works and finds favour with guests is shown by the success of the Association "Alpine Pearls". Their objective is to put together at least 100 tourist eco-packages in the next five years and financially promote them also in their opening stage.

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