

***Policies and actions to increase the competitiveness  
of intermodal freight transport***

**FINAL CONFERENCE OF THE RECORDIT PROJECT  
(REAL COST REDUCTION OF DOOR-TO-DOOR INTERMODAL TRANSPORT)**

***Brussels, 20&21 December 2001  
European Parliament - Room P4B001***

Dear participants,

I regret not to be able to deliver as foreseen the opening speech on this conference live in this room. As you hear, I have been forced, due to unforeseen political commitments here in Venice to participate only "virtually" to this opening session.

This said, I do not want to loose the opportunity to stress once again how the EU debate on Intermodality and fair and efficient pricing are essential in transport activities.

The RECORDIT project represents what I call a "best practice case".

Best practice cases are in my view, in the field of transport but also in many other fields, absolutely essential for the validation of theoretic concepts, especially when opinion leaders, stakeholders and the citizens are affected and must be convinced.

Some of you may remember the conference I have organised last year in November in this room on "*European Best practices on Infrastructure Charging and Internalisation of External Transport Costs*". I think this event played the role I expected it to play: explain difficult concepts by concrete and good examples.

Two months later my "Initiative report" on Infrastructure Charging was approved in plenary session by this Parliament despite a mixed reaction at the beginning of the consultations within this House.

The idea to implement a new transport infrastructure charging methodology at European level - based on both the "polluter pays" and "user pays" principles - was from that moment on accepted by the majority of this Parliament.

I am sure the RECORDIT final conference will reach the same objectives: explain, give evidence, motivate and contribute to change things.

This is - for me in particular - really important: mainly because, as you will discover in the next few hours, RECORDIT aims at defining and validating - and I insist once again on the word "validating" - a methodology for the calculation of the real costs of intermodal freight transport.

It represents, if you allow me to say so, the "practical" part of my report on Infrastructure Charging.

I think I am not revealing any secret if I say that the European Commission will probably use part of the RECORDIT findings and recommendations to prepare its proposal for *quote* "a framework directive on charging for the use of infrastructure" *end quote* to be submitted to the Council and the Parliament in mid-2002.

For all these reasons, I am very happy to host this conference in the European Parliament today.

I am sure it will contribute to clarify a little bit more the very complicated and controversial debate on real costs, charges and taxes in the field of transport.

It is time for Europe to go toward structuring prices more efficiently, creating fair conditions for transport operators and moving in the direction of more environmental sustainability.

I am particularly confident that we will soon see things changing. Less than one week ago, the Heads of States and Governments have indeed adopted the Laeken Presidency Conclusions stressing at point 58 that the *"Commission will submit its framework proposal on charging for the use of infrastructure .... as soon as possible"*.

Almost one year after the European Parliament, a political commitment has now been taken at the European Council level.

In conclusion, I want to remind Paragraph 2 of my report which insists on the fact *"that a comprehensive system of transport infrastructure charging should be based on the cost estimations as*

*accurately as possible and is an issue which needs further analysis to generalise best practices ... (with regards, inter alia, to criteria for full recovery charging, common cost/benefit analysis procedures, attribution of responsibilities and allocation of revenues)".*

No doubt that RECORDIT will show us the way.

Have a good trip!....

Paolo Costa