

**Conclusions of Lyon (F)
(20.10.2006)**

Introduction

The Declaration of Zurich of 30 November 2001 marked a turn in the cooperation between the Alpine countries in the area of transport toward more environmentally-friendly transport methods with the aim of bringing about greater safety for both people and goods while at the same time increasing economic efficiency. These goals are consistent with the Alpine Convention, including the Transport Protocol.

The working process that was initiated five years ago is an expression of a common interest, despite the differing geographic conditions in the various countries. Slovenia's accession in 2006 underlines the importance of the Alpine arc as a specific region of cooperation.

At their meeting on 20 October 2006 in Lyon held as part of the third Conference of Ministers of the Zurich Group under the presidency of France and in the presence of the European Union Commissioner for Transport, the transport ministers of Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland took stock of the work that has been carried out since the second conference in Regensburg on topics relating to the implementation of the Declaration of Zurich.

They agree to expand and deepen their cooperation with a view to achieving sustainable improvements in the safety of Alpine traffic, improving the handling of road freight traffic and promoting different types of infrastructure and alternative modes of transport, especially rail transport.

They welcome the good relationship with the European Commission, which attends the meetings of the Zurich Group as an observer, and desire to work together with the Commission to gain input for new ideas which should then be implemented in "best practices".

The ministers thank the experts for the high quality of their work. Taking into account the results achieved under the Swiss and French presidencies, and the work carried out in other bodies within the framework of international cooperation, they define the following priorities, chiefly to be carried out in the period 2007 - 2008.

Traffic Safety in the Alps

The working group proposals deal either with the general improvement of transport safety or refer specifically to distinctive conditions in the Alps. The French presidency will summarise these and forward them to the relevant professional associations and responsible international bodies before the end of the year, emphasising the Alpine countries' interest in their implementation. This is particularly true, for example, with regard to the development of driver assistance systems and safety devices or the inclusion of "Driving in Tunnels" in driving courses.

The Zurich Group has to date carried out important work on the safety of Alpine tunnels in terms of road traffic, which will be implemented within the

framework of the transfer and implementation of the European Union Directive 2004/54, which Switzerland also intends to incorporate into national law. It would also be desirable to carry out such work in an appropriate form in the area of Safety in Railway Tunnels as well.

The ministers adopt a resolution to continue their deliberations toward the harmonisation of financial penalties for traffic violations in road freight traffic, and underline the importance of joint control measures.

Management and Regulation of Road Traffic in the Alpine Region

Some major trans-alpine road axes are the subject of special management measures which are tailored to the particular situation of these routes and where it is not therefore practical to systematically extend them to other crossings.

However, in order to resolve crises situations which can arise as a result of long closures of trans-alpine axes and to reduce the negative impacts upon the respective local population and the environment, the Ministers agree to examine the basis, schedule and prerequisites for the development of a concerted emergency intervention plan for the trans-alpine transit routes.

Apart from the existing steering measures, the major challenges for the Alps relate to the long-term ability to cope with road freight traffic and the growing and massive use of alternatives in the form of rail or sea transport. These goals are only practical within the framework of a global view of the Alps in which the quality of economic relations, competitiveness and the free movement of goods are all maintained taking into account all framework conditions which have to be complied with. The ministers adopt a resolution to jointly fund a study on the type, importance, limits and conditions for the implementation of new systems to regulate trans-alpine traffic based on mechanisms such as reservation systems or "tradable transit permits" which have been developed in other areas (environment, energy). The specifications will be drawn up jointly without anticipation of the conclusions. The final report of this study should, if possible, be presented at the next Conference of Ministers so that the ministers can agree upon the next steps. The European Commission made reference to the importance of such systems for the future in the Interim Review of the White Paper, but does not plan to carry out a separate study. The ministers hope that the European Commission will provide financial support for this study which should be carried out within the framework of an overall European view of Alpine traffic.

Study on Alpine Mobility

The results of the CAFT survey conducted in 2004 have been jointly confirmed in respect of the development of freight traffic since 1999 and will be published in a suitable form and updated by each country. They represent an important contribution to the body of knowledge concerning trans-alpine

road traffic and strengthen the importance of the Observatory for Traffic in the Alpine Region established jointly by Switzerland and the European Union.

Similar work should be started in the area of trans-alpine passenger traffic with a view to examining the possibilities for a joint collection of data.

Promotion of Alternatives to Road Freight Traffic across the Alps

The experts collated all the studies that had been carried out in the Alpine countries to enable them to promote a highly-efficient alternative range of services, especially in the rail sector. They identified the common features of the respective approaches and established what would still have to be done in order to achieve a sustainable improvement in trans-alpine road freight traffic.

The results that were obtained confirm the need for an increasing shift away from road freight traffic to environmentally-friendly modes of transport, in particular on long-distance routes, in urban areas and on overburdened corridors.

Furthermore, the ministers wish to make an effort to promote efficient rail links by optimising existing routes, enhancing interoperability and by building additional base tunnels and the corresponding feeder lines.

New Presidency

The ministers thank the French presidency for its work and unanimously vote to entrust Austria with the presidency for the period 2007-2008.

The ministers request all future holders of the presidency to efficiently modify the working methods of the Steering Committee to the individual priority topics during a presidency.