

Cefic's feedback on the EU Commission's "Strategy for a Sustainable and Smart Mobility" roadmap

Cefic supports the Green Deal and Europe's ambition to become climate neutral by 2050. The Green Deal also recognizes the crucial role that the chemical industry plays in Europe's transition, as a key solution provider to multiple value chains and as a contributor to low emission mobility. The EU chemical industry intends to grasp the opportunities arising from the transition to a climate neutral and circular economy and from low emission distribution solutions.

A dedicated freight transport strategy, as part of the overall mobility strategy

To preserve the industry's competitiveness, a dedicated freight transport strategy is needed. The strategy for freight transport must take account of the specific characteristics when compared to passenger transport, such as longer distances, heavier loads, specific infrastructural needs, procedures and legislative environment in all freight transport modes. Freight transport efficiency and reliability suffers from having lower priority among authorities and infrastructure managers compared with passenger transport. This is particularly true in rail transport, undermining industry initiatives to support the modal shift away from the more carbon-intensive road transport.

The freight transport strategy must also consider the need to be globally competitive, especially to keep pace with the global transformation. In 2018, the European chemical industry generated a revenue of €560 billion of which 28% was derived from EU exports. Europe should avoid losing further global market share while going through the transition.

Transparency is essential to support decision making

Measuring is managing. Cefic calls on the European Commission to carry out a detailed market study to create transparency in the current freight trade lanes (all modes). This should allow to define freight transport infrastructure capacities and technical specifications needed in all modes (including pipelines) and for all goods, including dangerous goods, to enable the transition to a low emission transport system.

The transport sector should be supported and encouraged to measure and report their transport emissions (scope 1) in a standardized way, to enable shippers and freight forwarders to make sustainable distribution choices.

There is no "one size fits all" solution

While striving for a low emission transport system, the European chemical industry makes its multimodal distribution choices based on safety, reliability, customer needs and cost of the supply chain.

The pursuit of low emission vehicles for the transport of dangerous goods must consider end-to-end risk-

based analysis to ensure the most safe and sustainable solutions are selected.

Infrastructure, reliability, competitiveness as a prerequisite for low carbon transport

Transitioning towards a low emission transport system starts with making infrastructure available and providing competitive and reliable services. Cefic has already communicated its position on rail freight¹ and on single wagonload transport (SWT)². It underlines the urgent need for more reliability, simplified processes and procedures, better interoperability and stronger corridor management in international rail transport. On a local scale, a structural redesign of the first/last mile rail transport structure and processes as proposed in Cefic's SWT position, should be implemented

The cross-border supply chain disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic have emphasized the need for further European-wide harmonization of transport procedures and legislation. In addition, the realization of the TEN-T core network are key action areas to strengthen the EU single market. The existing maintenance and modernisation backlog of inland waterways, for example, needs to be overcome without any further delay.

Efficiency leads to sustainability! By increasing the utilization rate of the assets in every mode, their environmental impact will reduce. EU and national legislation should strive for maximum payload utilization in every mode to reduce emissions, e.g. 44 tonne across EU for non-intermodal trucks and 54 tonne for intermodal trucks, 25m high capacity trucks, longer and heavier trains etc.

Taxation on transport (internalization of external costs) should not prevail over multimodal optimization or making reliable and efficient low emission alternatives available. It would harm industry's competitiveness without any structural improvement in transport emissions. Focus should be on stimulating demand for low emission alternatives, considering the impacts on supply chain cost and lead time.

Innovation, digitalization and automation are the key enablers

At the same time the European Commission should upscale its focus on supporting investments in innovative solutions, new technologies and infrastructure to make sure optimal low emission alternatives are available.

The digitalization of information on goods, vehicles and drivers is a priority to realize compliant, safe and smart digital transport corridors. The chemical industry is facing daily legally required administrative procedures regarding characteristics, licenses, certificates of drivers and equipment. COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of contactless digital identification and authentication in logistics processes. The implementation of integrated digital solutions in business to authority processes (eFTI Legislation) should be sped up as business to business digitalization is progressing much faster.

Cefic requests the commission to include these chemicals freight transport automation and digitalization needs in the Horizon Europe program to achieve a sustainable transport system through innovations in all transport modes.

¹ <https://cefic.org/app/uploads/2019/06/Cefic-Position-on-European-Rail-Freight-and-Rail-Freight-Corridors.pdf>

² <https://cefic.org/app/uploads/2019/01/Cefic-Position-Paper-European-Single-Wagonload-Transport-SWT.pdf>

Cefic is looking forward to supporting the EU commission in the further development of the smart and sustainable mobility strategy, and to share its views in further consultation activities.

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About Cefic

Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council, founded in 1972, is the voice of large, medium and small chemical companies across Europe, which provide 1.2 million jobs and account for 16% of world chemicals production.