

Development of road transports and telematics

Resolution of the Transport Commission (Stuttgart - 11 April 1997)
adopted by the Barcelona Central Council (20 June 1997)

The topic selected for this meeting represents a further step in the study on lasting mobility conducted by the Transport commission, one aspect at a time. The study has focused, to date, on the effects of transport on the environment and energy consumption, the development of traffic congestion in the Alpine passes and in conurbations, the financial and other difficulties arising from the financing of infrastructure.

In each of these areas the commission's findings have shown how transport development comes up against limits.

Can telematics offer a remedy?

The European Parliament and Council have examined this question and the Council has recently adopted a resolution showing it to be of interest, though viewing it above all from the standpoint of the electronic levying of payments.

Yet the importance of telematics in the transport sector is not confined to its use for the levying of payments, though this aspect does give rise to complex problems requiring urgent solution.

Indeed, telematics can be a means of improving traffic regulation. In the urban context, for example, the system introduced in Bordeaux (France) and subsequently adopted by other cities, including some outside France, seems to demonstrate the potential for significant improvements. This proves easier in existing urban developments than setting up appropriate transport structures in new towns.

DAIMLER BENZ has developed studies along these lines, based on an awareness of a steadily increasing flow of road traffic in Germany - giving rise to fears of complete saturation by 2010 - in the light of a continuing shift of rail traffic towards the roads, in spite of a fallback in investment in road infrastructures.

The use of telematics can improve:

- ◇ safety, reducing the number of accidents by 20%
- ◇ driving comfort
- ◇ energy consumption, to the tune of 20%
- ◇ traffic congestion, to the tune of 50%, hence reducing pollution.

The cost/benefit ratio of the use of telematics has been estimated as 1 to 4. In spite of this excellent ratio, Europe appears to be holding back - even though the systems, which now include satellite-based models, were first developed by European scientists - whereas the city of Tokyo has shown great interest. This reluctance on the part of Europe appears comparable to the diffidence, which paralysed the mobile telephone industry until the recent fad.

It is important that the European national authorities, but also the Community bodies, take the necessary steps to trigger a process of telematics development in the transport sphere by prompting public interest via the most appropriate means.

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