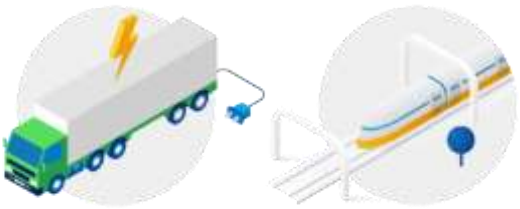
Towards a Sustainable Logistic Transportation in Europe

Our recommendations for Apostolos Tzitzikostas
European Commissioner-designate for Sustainable Transport

September 2024

As we move into the next five years of the European Parliament mandate, the members of the Platform for Electromobility remain committed to advancing sustainable transport solutions that drive decarbonisation of the transport of goods in Europe. To achieve this, it is essential to electrify all modes of regional logistic transports, on and off the roads. On road, the electrification of transport is still at the very early days of its development and requires significant and necessary efforts, for large CO2 emission saving potential. Off-roads, the rail and multimodal sectors present opportunities for quicker gains due to their existing capacity. By integrating various modes of transport, we can create efficient, zero-emission logistics networks that reduce reliance on road transport.

Below, we outline the necessary legislative steps required to decarbonize the European logistic system, addressing both vehicles and infrastructure, for transport modes on and off the roads.



More about the Platform for Electromobility

The Platform for Electromobility is a unique alliance of Europe-based producers, infrastructure managers, operators, transport users, cities and environmental civil society organisations from across industries and transport modes. Our overarching goal is to reach a sustainable, multimodal transport system in which people and goods are moved across land, inland waterways, sea and air in Europe using exclusively fossil-free electricity. To reach its vision, the Platform unites all sectors constituting the electromobility ecosystem to pragmatically ensure the conditions for the full electrification of new light-duty vehicles by 2035, and build a sustainable European zero-emission transport system by collectively sharing their expertise, challenges and solutions.

For more information about the platform and its members, please visit:

https://www.platformelectromobility.eu/

1/ On Vehicles: Continuing the work initiated by the first von der Leyen Commission

We urge the next European executive to continue the work initiated by the first von der Leyen Commission. These initiatives are crucial for the deployment and renewal of logistic vehicle fleets, which are a key component of the logistic ecosystem.

- The proper **implementation of CO2 standards for trucks and buses** is critical for this third pillar. We invite policy-makers to ensure adherence to the regulation as approved by co-legislators in 2023.
- Political initiatives will be essential to encourage the adoption of zero-emission vehicles, therefore we urge a **cleaning corporate fleet proposal** by the European Commission, after the related consultation, subsidies, tax incentives, and scrappage schemes for older diesel trucks.
- To incentivise the uptake of zero-emission trucks further, we call Member States to engage in an **effective review of the Weights and Dimensions Directive,** bearing in mind the goal to promote the dissemination of those vehicles. Decarbonising road freight transport is vital, given that it is currently dominated by diesel HDVs (including European Modular Systems where permitted). Zero-emission trucks need adequate weight allowances to accommodate their technology and lawmakers should avoid granting guarantee that their circulation is not unjustly constrained to minimal percentages of the TEN-T core network[1].
- Call on Member States to reach a general approach on the Combined Transport Directive by the end of the year, with a view to promote the use of Zero-Emission Vehicles for short and medium range connections (for which Zero-Emission HDV will be well adapted) and a modal shift towards more energy efficient and highly electrified modes of transport such as rail.
- Given that the average lifespan of rail rolling stock in Europe is approximately 30 years, targeted investments in **zero-emission trains** will be crucial for phasing out diesel propulsion and advancing rail electrification efforts. Infrastructure managers and operators - particularly in Central and Eastern Europe where rolling stock fleets are older - stand to benefit significantly from investments in new zero-emission rolling stock.

Key necessary policy initiatives:

Implement regulations and incentives for Zero-Emission trucks: Implement robust CO2 standards for trucks and buses, propose a clean corporate fleet initiative, and offer subsidies, tax incentives, and scrappage schemes to accelerate the adoption of zero-emission vehicles and renew outdated diesel fleets.

Enhance legislation to support Zero-Emission Transport: Reach a swift and ambitious general approach on the proposal to revise the Combined Transport Directive and review the Weights and Dimensions Directive to support zero-emission trucks while preventing expanded circulation of heavier diesel vehicles, and invest in the electrification of rail infrastructure, especially in regions with aging rolling stock, to phase out diesel propulsion in rail transport.

[1] The latest, failed compromise under the Belgian Presidency proposed limiting the circulation of 44-tonne ZETs to 25% of the TEN-T core network by 2030, 50% by 2035, and 100% by 2040 in countries that do not permit 44t trucks internally (e.g., Germany). The Commission's proposal did not include such a restriction, which, as evident, would significantly disadvantage ZETs. If this proposal were adopted, it could also allow Member States like Germany to restrict the circulation of ZETs that already benefit from the existing 2t allowance (i.e., 42t ZETs) to these minimal percentages of the TEN-T core network.

2/ On Infrastructure: implement the Green Deal for both above and underground assets.

The second pillar of a sustainable logistic ecosystem is its infrastructure. We believe that the legislation agreed upon under the European Green Deal in recent years is highly relevant and can be effective if properly implemented.

- Ensuring a swift and coherent **implementation of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation** (AFIR) for public charging infrastructure and the national transposition of the Energy Performance of Builidngs Directive (EPBD) for private charging infrastructure is paramount. Member States should develop robust national plans based on AFIR and EPBD targets and on future demand, supporting the deployment of charging infrastructure for eHDVs. We recommend European fundings to still be allocated to the roll out of charging infrastructures for eHDVs via the AFIF.
- To incentivise an impactful decarbonisation of the HDV sector by using more electricity by renewable energy sources, Member States should fast-track the **implementation of the Renewable Energy Directive III (REDIII) credit mechanism** for EV Chargers in order to be ready for 21st May 2025. The mechanism should be implemented not only for the public accessible chargers but also for the private ones, in order to lower electric HDVs' Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and incentivise private actors to deploy chargers and become active in the market, using private resources. By making the most of available credits and financial incentives, this will support business cases for private investments in eHDVs infrastructure.
- The electrification of the **Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) rail network** by 2030, 2040 and 2050 will require substantial investments with priority for three key areas. First, maintenance of existing infrastructure is paramount for ensuring optimal track conditions, enabling higher speeds and improving services. Second, upgrading existing network infrastructure - including implementing the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) signalisation and addressing bottlenecks - are crucial for enhancing efficiency and capacity.

Underground, the power distribution grid will also need substantive measures to adapt to the decarbonation of logistical transport. We invite next European Commissioner for Transport to *:*

- ensure that the **expansion of the electricity distribution grid** keeps pace with the rapidly growing demand for fast chargers for electric heavy-duty vehicles (eHDVs). This requires substantial investment, forward-looking planning, including anticipatory investments, and appropriate mapping on hosting capacity by system operators and streamlined connection procedures to support the necessary infrastructure. We also emphasize the importance of reinforcing the commitments made during the Energy Council in June under the Belgian Presidency, which underscored the need for a coordinated approach to grid development in anticipation of future demand.
- Promoting the deployment of **Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) technology** will also be crucial in enhancing grid integration and reducing the total cost of ownership for eHDVs. The development of smart charging systems and bidirectional charging capabilities will support grid stability and renewable energy use. Synergies between eHDVs and eBuses charging infrastructure, like shared depots whenever possible can be sought minimize grid connection requests and optimize public space.

Key necessary policy initiatives:

Accelerate implementation of green infrastructure legislations: Ensure swift and coherent execution of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) and Renewable Energy Directive III (REDIII) to expand charging infrastructure for electric heavy-duty vehicles (eHDVs) and integrate more renewable energy sources, lowering the total cost of ownership and incentivizing private investment.

Invest in rail and power grid infrastructure: Prioritize electrification and upgrades of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) rail network, including maintenance and European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) enhancements, and expand the electricity grid to meet the increasing demand for fast chargers for eHDVs. Encourage the deployment of Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) technology and smart charging systems to enhance grid stability and support the broader use of renewable energy.

We strongly invite the future European Commissioner for Sustainable Transport, Member States and members of the European Parliament Committee for Transport to follow these guidelines to ensure not only the sustainability of logistic transportation in Europe but also to foster a competitive, innovative, and environmentally friendly transport sector that benefits all European citizens.