



The Eurocouncil of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile
European Bureau

STATEMENT TO THE ECMT INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM, SOFIA 2007

10 May 2007

As the voice of Europe's motoring consumers, the European Bureau of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the leading motoring organisation representing 34 million consumers, has been closely monitoring European transport policy for many years.

One of its highest priorities is to increase the efficiency and sustainability of the mobility of Europe's citizens. The FIA believes that a prerequisite for sustainable mobility is ensuring smooth traffic flow - avoiding congestion and limiting air pollution - and giving a high level of safety - avoiding accidents. The FIA therefore particularly welcomes that the ECMT debates traffic congestion in this year's ministerial meeting.

With regard to the costs that traffic congestion and related obstacles impose on European economies, the FIA would particularly like to draw attention to the issue of quantification. A vital tool to assess transport-related problems is sound statistics. Quantifying transport performance should be an important step when highlighting a problem, assessing its extent and defining the need for action.

Quantified evidence of traffic congestion partially exists on a national or regional level following national or regional statistical methods. The FIA is however, not aware of any usable pan-European statistics. The main reason for this is that – like in many other areas – statistical methods have not been harmonised. The figures given in the documents published by the European Commission are therefore in our opinion not reliable.

In discussions with statistical and economic experts of the European Commission and Eurostat it has become clear that such statistics do not exist on an international, pan-European level. On this basis, developing policies to combat traffic congestion without usable numerical and statistical foundations is like developing economic policy without sound GDP figures, interest rates or price indices.

The FIA hopes that the ECMT's debate will endorse and underline our call to prioritise the development of more reliable and comparable transport statistics.

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