

Fifth Framework Programme
Competitive and Sustainable Growth

Key Action 2
Sustainable Mobility and Intermodality

Task 2.1.1/8

Thematic Network on Trans-Alpine Crossing

Contract Number: GTC1/2000/28057-SI2.315865)



Work Package 3: **Trans-Alpine Crossing - Vertical Themes**

Deliverable 4: **Trans-Alpine transport: A Local Problem in Search of European Solutions or a European Problem in Search of Local Solutions?**

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With contributions from partners and members

Version **8 October 2002**

Status **Final Version**

Co-ordinator ICCR

Core partners INRETS × ECOPLAN × NEA × DITS

Permanent members IWW × EPFL × NETR × MARIBOR

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1 Preface

One of the cross-sectoral themes of ALP-NET (WP3) was to consider the decision-making context characterising policy-making regarding trans-Alpine transport. To this end a review of policies, institutional arrangements and relevant actors was carried out in the framework of WP1 and then updated in preparation of workshop WS3A which was devoted to this subject. This report synthesises the information thus gathered.

Annex 1 of this deliverable summarises the individual presentations and the discussions at the third ALP-NET workshop – the long version papers and presentations can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Web Site (www.alp-net.org) and can also be read in the Annex II of this report (in CD-ROM).

2 Introduction

Transport in and through the Alpine regions of Europe is a sensitive political issue. Trans-alpine transport was one dimension of the negotiations between Austria and the European Commission regarding EU membership; it has been a source of continuous debates and uneasiness in the external foreign relations between the EU and Switzerland; and, it has led to widespread grassroots resistance against national and European transport policies from the population in the trans-versed regions. Major tunnel accidents (in the Mont Blanc, the Tauern, and Gotthard as of recently) have aggravated the situation, exemplifying the sensitivity of the region with regard to infrastructures, their safety impacts and environmental effects.

The Alps represent a bottleneck in the literal sense as well as in policy terms. A concentration of several factors representing opposing needs, resources, threats and opportunities in an area with numerous topographical and ecological specificities and under different political administrative jurisdictions fulfils the conditions for the emergence of an intractable policy problem. On its own, however, this cannot explain why and how the problem has come to be – also when allowing for the fact that it has been long in the making. It has rather been the specific mixture and timing of these factors and the way they have been dealt with (or not) which explains this problem. Prior to elaborating on this theme, we examine its individual aspects separately.

2.1 The transport geography of the Alps

The Alps extend for a distance of roughly 1,000 kms from the south-west of France to the East of Austria. There are 14 main routes crossing the Alpine mountain range (Molitor, 1996). Of these, ten consist of well-developed infrastructure allowing for the 'high speed' transport of goods and passengers. These ten routes carry together 80 per cent of the trans-Alpine traffic volume. Due to the topographical characteristics of the region, the construction of additional routes would be prohibitively expensive. The improvement of infrastructure along existing routes is likewise associated with unusually high costs, not least because of the several tunnels and bridges involved. The latter are also increasingly being recognised as a major safety problem. During the last four years two of the major routes had to be closed for a considerable period of time following serious accidents in the Mont Blanc tunnel in France, and the Tauern tunnel in Austria. Currently the Gotthard tunnel in Switzerland is not fully operating for the same reason.

2.2 The Alps as a major economic resource

Economic growth, the increase of international trade and the re-location of industries in areas with low labour costs, has led to a significant increase of long-distance freight transport through the Alps. From the early 1970s to 1995 there was a 300 per cent increase of total freight traffic through the Alps and a 1,000 per cent increase in road traffic (Eidgenössisches Verkehrs- und Energiewirtschaftsdepartment, 1996; CIPRA, 1998). Within the small Alpine arc delineated by the Mont-Cenis / Frejus and Brenner axes, 100 million tons of goods were transferred in 2000 as compared to 51 million in 1980, the average rail share being 39 per cent but ranging from only 25 per cent in Austria to 70 per cent in Switzerland. Transit traffic made for 65 per cent of all traffic, ranging from 32 per cent in France to 91 per cent in Austria (Alpinfo, 2001).

Austria's accession to the EU, the implementation of the Customs Union as well as the Schengen Agreement are all factors that contributed to the increase of international freight transport through the Alps. Since 1995 and despite the renewal of the Ecopoint system, freight transit through the Alps has continued to increase at a rate of over six per cent per year (in terms of millions of tons). During the 1990s a 60 per cent increase of road freight transport was noted as compared to only 20 per cent cumulative GDP growth for the region.

At another level, not to be underestimated (or forgotten) is the importance of the Alps as a tourist destination around the year but especially during the winter season. Even allowing for the fact that passenger transport is not as detrimental to environment and life quality as long-distance freight transport, it is still true that during the same period there has been a steady increase of passenger

transport to and through the Alps.¹ Those routes that are the source of environmental pollution to the Alps (thus also endangering the long-term sustainability of the Alps as a major resource of economic wealth) are the same routes needed to transfer clients to the famous ski resorts.

2.3 The natural environment

The emission of noise and atmospheric pollutants in Alpine regions leads to higher immissions than in less mountainous terrain. Noise emissions along an average Alpine motorway cover an area four times as large as similar emissions on an average German motorway (Transitforum Austria, 2000). The circulation of air in Alpine valleys tends to be lower due to the phenomenon of atmospheric inversion. There is a high concentration of atmospheric pollutants, especially during the night (three to five times higher than during the day) and the winter season (two to four times higher than during the summer) (Siegrist, 2002). Additional factors specific to the Alpine regions leading to higher levels and stronger impacts of air pollution are the gradients of the roads, the height above sea level and the protection function of forests. Studies of the marginal costs of atmospheric pollution of road transport along the Alpine corridors suggest that these are nearly twice as high than at the European level (Suter *et al.*, 1999).

3 The policy context

3.1 Austria

The core of the Austrian Alpine transport policy is the Transit Agreement signed between the European Community and Austria in 1992 and confirmed upon the accession of Austria in the EU. The agreement expires at the end of 2003.

In theory the agreement covers both freight and passenger transport, but in practice it has only been applicable to freight. In this Transit Agreement, Austria and the European Community committed themselves to promote environmental

¹ For the most part winter time passenger leisure traffic is local or national and not transit traffic. Transit passenger traffic is mostly to be attributed to holiday-makers from Germany and the Scandinavian countries travelling either to the Alps or through the Alps to Italy.

sustainability in the Alps by seeking a reduction of the negative effects of transport on the environment. Two modes of action were given priority.

First, to improve rail infrastructure, thus increasing the competitiveness of rail and combined transport. Towards this goal, the Brenner base tunnel was included on the list of the 14 priority TEN-T projects established in 1994 (the so-called Christopherson list). This base tunnel is a missing (rail) link on the Brenner axis, which is the main Austrian route through the Alps.² Plans were made for the Brenner base tunnel yet these were never implemented due to lack of funding. The Commission has under existing regulations only been able to contribute 10 per cent to the financing of this project and Austria has been unwilling to take over the remaining financial burden, given that the Brenner axis serves primarily transit traffic and the interests of mainly Italy and the Netherlands (more specifically the ports of Genoa and Rotterdam).³

At the very heart of the Transit Agreement between Austria and the EU lies the Ecopoint system for heavy good vehicles (above 7.5 tons). The Ecopoint system foresees a 60 per cent reduction of NOx emissions by the year 2003, the base year being 1991. Prior to 1995 it only applied to trucks registered in the then 12 EU Member States but not to Austria or other countries. Since 1995 and in view of discrimination concerns with regard to competition, not only Sweden and Finland but also Austria were integrated into the system. Austria entered into related agreements with Slovenia and Switzerland in 1997 and 2000 respectively.

The Ecopoint system works as follows: Each Ecopoint corresponds to a certain amount of NOx emissions, therefore the less polluting a truck (either because of size or because of its engine), the fewer points it will consume for the same journey. Austria grants a certain number of Ecopoints to the EU and associated countries. The European Commission is in charge of distributing these to EU Member States. The total number of Ecopoints has been steadily decreasing in order to reach the 60 per cent reduction target by 2003 as foreseen by the Agreement. In order to guard against a vast increase in transit traffic because of unanticipated technological developments, the Transit Agreement limits the total number of trips (in absolute terms) to 108 per cent of those registered in 1991 (around 1,593,000 crossings). Exceeding this number of trips in any year should lead to a reduction of the total number of Ecopoints in the subsequent year. Yet

² In 1995 a total of 31 million tons of goods were transferred through the Brenner axis, of which 73 per cent by road and 27 per cent on rail. This represented half of all goods transported through the Austrian Alpine routes in the same year (ÖSTAT 1996, quoted in Freudensprung, 1997).

³ A new financing concept has recently been released by the state-owned company in charge of the Brenner base tunnel. Besides a higher EC contribution to the construction of this tunnel, this new financing concept foresees Italian and Austrian public / private financing.

what counts as a trip is not uncontested. In 1999 and 2000 Austria registered a substantial increase of the absolute number of trips and proceeded to request a reduction of the Ecopoints (in 2001). The Commission refused to reduce the Ecopoints granted to EU Member States. The case has been brought to the European Court by Austria but has still to be decided upon. In the meantime, also pending is a similar case corresponding to the Ecopoints to be allocated in the period 2002/2003. The Commission's point of view is that the statistics supplied by Austria regarding the number of trips included double countings.

Besides the Ecopoint system, Austria has since 1994 a special tax for heavy good vehicles (above 12 tons) and since 1997 a vignette system for the use of Austria motorways applicable to passenger cars and trucks carrying a weight below 12 tons. These charges also apply to the Alpine routes which, in part, display additional tolls for specific crossings.⁴ It has been estimated that the transit fees for a truck using the Brenner axis from Wörgl to Verona (a distance of close to 335 km) amounts to around 155 Euro during the day and 200 Euro (during the night). Electronic road charging that is distance-related to substitute for charges for heavy good vehicles is currently in planning and expected to be implemented in 2004.

At present and as the Ecopoint system is approaching its end, there are heated debates as to whether it should be renewed and if so, under what conditions. The ongoing legal case between the European Commission and Austria on whether the Ecopoints should have been reduced already in 2001 (and again in 2002 and 2003) (and on whether the statistics included double countings) does not make these negotiations any easier, but, in principle, the problem is that despite the explicit intention in the Transit Agreement to end the Ecopoint system in 2003, neither the Austrian federal government nor the Tyrol regional government (or the citizen association movements exerting pressure on both) are of the opinion that the system should be abandoned without a substitute.

This is also however where agreement ends. Whilst the federal government is (at least officially) currently negotiating a renewal of the system for only one year (with a possibility of further renewal only if the framework pricing directive is not implemented by then), the Tyrol regional government and local communities / associations are in favour of a medium-term agreement, till that time when a better and more comprehensive solution is found that is successful in effecting an absolute reduction to (transit) traffic.

⁴ These additional tolls (as well as their differentiation according to time of day) have been highly contested and have also led to a legal confrontation between the EC and Austria. This case, in turn, influenced the position of Austria in the negotiations regarding the Land Transport Agreement between Switzerland and the European Union (see below). Austria was favourable to this agreement under the condition that the EC would drop its legal case against Austria if the latter were to 'stretch' this additional toll to a longer section of the Brenner axis (Pösel, 1999).

The Commission, under pressure from Italy and Greece (as well as Germany and France, albeit to a lesser extent), is willing to accept a renewal of the Ecopoint system till 2004 but for no longer, its argument being that by then, the framework pricing directive will have been implemented Europe-wide. Besides effecting the harmonisation of duties also along the Alpine routes, the pricing directive is expected to effect the balance between modes and the reduction of environmental effects, indirectly by allowing for the internalisation of environmental costs and their use in the estimation of the road charges. This has in theory not been possible till now as the existing pricing directive only allowed for costs incurred for the purpose of maintenance (cf. EC, 1995, 1998; Hummer 1999). Furthermore, the Commission expects that the Directive will allow 'over-charging' in environmentally sensitive areas. This economic measure combined with the intention to loosen up constraints concerning the use of revenues from road pricing for the purpose of cross-subsidising is expected, according to the Commission, to resolve the problems through the Alps, thus making the Ecopoint system obsolete.

3.2 Switzerland

Since the early seventies and despite its strong federal structure, Switzerland displays a fairly integrated national transport policy. This is strongly related to the role of Switzerland for transit traffic and the role of the trans-Alpine crossings in this connection. Like in Austria there is a strong national pride in the Alps and a diffused concern about its environmental sustainability.

The goal of effecting a sustainable modal shift from road to rail through the Alps was stated in the Swiss Integral Concept of Transport (SICT) of 1977 (Oetterli, 1998; Walter, 1998) which additionally – and in a pioneering way for the time – recognised the importance of internalising the external (environmental) costs of transport. A highway vignette (for passenger cars) and a flat rate heavy vehicle tax were introduced in 1984 following a popular vote. More detailed transport policy propositions concerning both pricing but also new infrastructure investment were elaborated in the Coordinated Transport Policy Plan (SCTP). These propositions were rejected – again by popular vote in 1988 – due to increasing fears that they would lead to higher taxes on motorised individual transport and excessive centralisation. Yet the constant and significant increase of international and transit traffic throughout the eighties convinced the Swiss population to vote in favour of new trans-Alpine rail links (NARL) in a referendum in 1992.⁵ Following the clarification of the mode of financing, these

⁵ The original proposal regarding the NARL was for improvements along one link, either via Gothard or Lötschberg. In order to avoid polarisation, in particular between the Swiss German majority and Swiss French minority which favoured different solutions, the final proposal of the Swiss federal government covered both links.

links, which cover both the Lötschberg and Gotthard crossings, are currently under construction.

Around the same time Switzerland negotiated a transit agreement with the European Union. This entered into force in 1993 at the same time as the transit agreement with Austria. Unlike the latter, the Transit Agreement with Switzerland included no Ecopoint system but instead more detailed infrastructure investment plans and an acceptance, by the European Union, of the 28-tonne limit for lorries (on a transitional basis) and the night and Sunday ban on trucks. This agreement is valid till 2005.

The early nineties saw a major grassroots mobilisation with regard to transport through the Alps. The so-called Alpine Initiative – an umbrella organisation of several environmental associations – demanded a complete modal shift from road to rail insofar as transit transport was concerned and proposed related policy measures. Following a rejection of its proposals by the Federal Council – due to their inconsistency with the provisions of the Transit Treaty with the European Union –, the Alpine Initiative called for a referendum. This was decided in its favour and led to an amendment of the Swiss Constitution to include an article (currently Article 84) which explicitly states that freight through the Alps must be transported by rail, that all road transport should have been transferred to rail by 2004, and that the capacity of roads in the Alps will not be increased through new road investments. This made possible the introduction of further economic measures regarding transport, in particular of the mileage-related heavy vehicle tax (MRHVT).⁶ In other words, the Alpine Initiative and its success enabled (or forced, depending on the perspective taken) the Swiss government to proceed with at least part of its policy plans as outlined in the Coordinated Transport Policy Plan of 1988. However, at the same time, this got it into problems with the European Union in view of the 1992 Transit Agreement and the ongoing (at the time) negotiations on the Land Transport Agreement regarding the harmonisation of road market legislation with EU directives. These later negotiations were necessitated following the popular vote against joining the EEA in 1992.

Negotiations on the Land Transport Agreement could only resume in 1995 following an operational concept for the mileage-related heavy vehicle tax (MRHVT), which was acceptable to the European Union.⁷ The law on the

⁶ The original plan for the implementation of the Alpine Initiative demands foresaw also the levying of an Alpine transit tax. However this was subsequently dropped as this could not be considered additive (but only as substituting) the MRHVT (as per European Regulations which Switzerland accepted through the Land Transport Agreement).

⁷ The MRHVT covers all heavy road vehicles above 3.5 tonnes carrying either goods or passengers and is levied according to (a) the maximum permissible overall weight; (b) the pollutant category of the vehicle (EURO 0, EURO I, II, III) and (c) the distance covered in Switzerland. However the charge cannot be lower than € 0.39 and not higher

MRHVT was approved by popular vote in 1998 and foresees both the application of the 'polluter pays' principle through the internalisation of external costs and the possibility of using the revenues for financing rail projects.⁸ It is expected to provide the one lever that will enable to achieve a significant modal shift from road to rail for freight through the Alps, whereby there is no mention anymore about a complete modal shift as foreseen by the Swiss constitution (article 84). In return for accepting this tax to be levied on domestic and European trucks, Switzerland has agreed to gradually, till 2005, lift its ban on 40-tonne lorries.⁹ The Land Transport Agreement, which came into effect in 2001, will supplement the Transit Agreement till 2005 and will then replace it. The MRHVT has become one key component of this agreement. Other key components are the opening of the Swiss road and rail market to European operators and vice-versa.¹⁰

With the Land Transport Agreement with the European Union (BALT), the MRHVT, the NARL and ongoing railway reforms, the Swiss government is of the opinion that it has established all cornerstones for the implementation of a comprehensive sustainable transport policy, despite the original rejection of its Coordinated Transport Policy Plan in 1988, and in agreement both with the EU and public opinion.¹¹ In the latter respect it is worth noting that out of 27 popular votes on transport policy since 1977, only two were rejected (Vatter, Sager *et al.*, 2000).

However it should be noted that these four pillars of Swiss transport policy will not unfold their full benefits overnight, particularly as the NARL will come into

than € 1.96 per metric tonne and 100 kilometres travelled. The maximum transit price for a 40-tonne vehicle that covers a distance of 300 km (Basle-Chiasso) was set at € 195, which corresponds to an average of € 1.69 per t/100 km. Coaches (i.e. heavy vehicles for passengers) pay a flat yearly rate according to size (which ranges from € 1,040 for vehicles between 3.5 to 8.5 tonnes to € 2,080 for vehicles over 18 tonnes). See Federal Law on MRHVT SR 641.81; related decree SR 641.811.

⁸ Related to this is the Public Transport Financing Package which foresees the setting up of a fund for the financing of major railway projects to be fed by the MRHVT (by two-thirds), fuel tax, a 0.1 per cent increase in the rate of VAT and long-term capital market loans. See Federal Resolution on Regulations concerning the funding of large-scale rail projects, SR 742.140; and BAV (2000), Fact Sheets: Modernisation of the Railways.

⁹ In 2001 to 34 tonnes and in 2005 to 40 tonnes.

¹⁰ On the subject of the modernisation of Railway Reforms, see BAV (2000), Fact Sheets: Railway Reform. The principles of reform of the Swiss railways follow largely the recommendations of the European Union for the introduction of competition and the separation of infrastructure and service sectors.

¹¹ See speech of Hans Werder, secretary general of DETEC to the final conference of the National Research Programme 41 on Transport & Environment: <http://www.nfp41.ch/download/Tagung/abschluss/werder.doc>

operation only between 2007 and 2014. In order to improve the modal split in favour of rail, already during the transitional period, the Swiss Parliament recently passed a new law on this subject: as soon as possible, and no later than two years after the opening of the Lötschberg tunnel (in 2009), no more than a maximum of 650,000 lorries should be crossing the Alps in Switzerland on the road. This would be equivalent to reducing the current number of crossings by half. Almost two billion Euro have been set aside for the years 2000 to 2010 for implementing different accompanying measures for achieving this target. By 2010 the government plans to replace this law by a new act implementing Article 84 that is likely to include a legal basis for the introduction of an Alpine transit tax.¹²

In January 2000, another initiative, the so-called Avanti initiative (www.initiative-avanti.ch) was launched with the goal of extending the highway network around and between urban conurbations. The proposal foresees a second road tunnel through the Gotthard. Following the rejection of this proposal by the Swiss federal government, a popular vote is expected in the year 2004. If successful, this would imply a part renunciation of the current policy regarding a stop on road investments in the Alps, albeit not of the Alpine Convention (see below) once this has been ratified by the Swiss Parliament (ECOPLAN, 2001).

3.3 **France**

Over the last ten years, trans-Alpine transport has gradually evolved into a priority also for France. France is in theory also interested in promoting sustainable mobility, however its position is different from that of Switzerland and Austria in three important ways:¹³

First, for France the problems caused by trans-Alpine transport are national more than they are international. Transit traffic through the French Alps makes only one third of total traffic, as compared to over two thirds in Switzerland and over 90 per cent in Austria.

Secondly, France seems more aware of the fact that it needs to coordinate its policy with other Alpine countries and especially Switzerland and Italy, albeit for different reasons: Switzerland, because it is directly influenced by any

¹² Statement by Ueli Balmer of the Swiss Office for Spatial Development at the ALP-NET First Workshop, October 2001.

¹³ Cf. Legrand Report (1993); and Brossier Report (1998) on the French policy with regard to land transport through the Alps.

restrictions on transit traffic imposed there;¹⁴ and Italy, for economic reasons related to the bilateral trade and the Lyon-Turin rail link.

Thirdly, whilst recognising the importance of promoting rail transport through the Alps, France is less against an upgrading or expansion of road links and, with the exception of the Mont Blanc, has not been seriously challenged by the population in this respect.

There are two main crossings through the Alps between France and Italy: the Mont Blanc which is a road connection; and the Frejus / Cenis, road (Frejus) and rail (Cenis) connection. The road corridors have a toll system, charges for a trip between Lyon and Santhia through Frejus are around € 218 (for a distance of 346 km).

France expects a dramatic increase of annual freight traffic through the Alps from 80 million tons transported in 2000 (across all crossings) to 170 million in 2020.¹⁵ In order to meet this challenge it will seek a combination of measures, especially investment in rail, and road pricing. With regard to rail, it plans the strengthening or construction of other rail connections between France and Italy (for instance, the Dijon-Vallorbe-Lausanne-Simplon connection in the Northern Alps; or the Ambérieu-Turin connection in the Central Alpine region) whereby due to the topography the maximum capacity on such links is also limited. This is also why the absolute capacity through French Alpine crossings is estimated at maximum 65 million tons per year (from currently 35), whereby the road capacity is estimated not to change at all, hence all possible increase should come through rail.

The French Mission of the Alps expects to limit road transport through the Alps at its current levels with the absolute number of crossings not exceeding 1,600,000 in 2020. This it expects to achieve through the re-routing of some of the projected increase of transport to the sea; as well as through economic regulatory measures, principally an increase of the tariffs through the tunnels and on the road crossings in a way similar to Switzerland (i.e. according to the emission type of the vehicle, and eventually distance-related with the European framework directive on pricing).

Another measure which is indirectly expected to limit the crossings by road through the Alps are the new security regulations with regard to driving through the road tunnels. These were agreed upon on occasion of the re-opening of the Mont Blanc in late 2001. According to the new scheme the number of trucks through the tunnel will be limited to 220 per hour. Technically, the system will

¹⁴ In fact, in France it is considered that the increase of transit traffic through the French Alps over the last twenty years is almost completely to be attributed to the restrictive and expensive Swiss policy.

¹⁵ Communication by Noel Lebel of the Mission Alps, ALPNET Workshop October 2001.

work by stopping all trucks 20km before the entry to the tunnel and letting them 'trickle out' one by one in certain intervals. The new limits on the number of trucks in the tunnel are set primarily as a safety measure and will guarantee a distance between lorries of at least 150-200m.¹⁶ In addition to the new limit of 220 trucks per hour in each direction there will also be a global limit of the number of trucks which will be allowed to pass through the tunnel each year. These measures will limit the NOx emissions in the tunnel but are not expected to have a major effect outside the tunnel.

3.4 **Italy**

For Italy Alpine transport policy is governed primarily by economic interests. Indeed transport originating in Italy (and the ports of Genoa) accounts for over 80 per cent of transit traffic through the Alps. Furthermore Italian companies use all major crossings through the Alps, i.e. travel through Switzerland, Austria, France as well as Slovenia.

Italy has signed bilateral agreements with France and Switzerland (in January and February 2001 respectively) committing it to invest in the improvement of rail infrastructure within its borders along the major routes towards the Alps. Italy has also been improving its rail infrastructure on the Brenner axis, however the main bottleneck here is on Austrian territory. In view of its opposition to the renewal and extension of the Ecopoint system, in recent negotiations at European level between Austria and the European Commission (in the presence of representatives from Italy, Greece, Germany and France), Italy has offered to contribute financially to the construction of the Brenner base tunnel (media reports Summer 2002).¹⁷

Finally, Italy has entered into negotiations at the technical level with Slovenia for the upgrading of the 'fifth' link across the Alps linking Italy, Slovenia, Hungary and Ukraine.

¹⁶ Similar measures were introduced on the Gotthard tunnel in Switzerland following a recent accident. These measures are expected to remain in force also after repairs. See http://www.uvek.admin.ch/gs_uvek/de/dokumentation/mediemitteilungen.

¹⁷ This is in line with the inclusion of trans-alpine corridors (Frejus, Brennero and Sempione crossings) in the Italian investment plans for 2002-2004. There it is stated that the Italian government is willing to contribute to the financing of these links, albeit provided a public-private partnership can be achieved. Cf. with recent financing concept for the Brenner published by the Austrian side (footnote 3).

3.5 The European Union

There is no European Alpine transport policy as such. However several initiatives or activities of the European Commission are of relevance for Alpine transport, either directly or indirectly.

Of direct relevance are the bilateral Agreements between the European Commission and Austria and Switzerland respectively, which led to the Transit Agreements for both countries as well as the Land Transport Agreement with Switzerland. These were described in the previous sections. Of indirect relevance are the policy proposals and, where successful, directives on specific transport measures, in particular investment and pricing. This section focuses on these.

Clearly the creation and implementation alone of the European Economic Area through a host of directives on market access for the facilitation of international trade has had a direct effect on traffic growth through the Alps. The launching of the so-called Trans-European network vision in various sectors, including in transport, led to the prioritisation of several infrastructure projects across Europe identified as bottlenecks or missing links. Two of these, in particular the Brenner base tunnel and the Lyon-Turin connection are Alpine projects for the most part. Both have however faced serious implementation difficulties, primarily, but not alone, due to financing barriers and despite the availability of European funding (through the TEN-T budget) for this purpose. The benefits of both projects as estimated in several feasibility studies have tended to be underestimated when assessed from solely the national perspective. In addition, their costs are extremely high and none of the three countries concerned is eligible for additional funds through the Structural / Cohesion Funds.

In recognition of the difficulties involved in financing projects of European interest, the 2001 White Paper on European Transport Policy has proposed the increase of the European financial contribution for the realisation of these projects from 10 to 20 per cent. It remains to be seen whether this helps in making progress towards the completion of the base tunnels on the Brenner axis and the Lyon-Turin connection, both of which would be of importance for trans-Alpine transport, especially with regard to rail and combined transport.

Two other proposals of the 2001 White Paper are potentially of special relevance for Alpine transport. The first one is at the core of the proposed European transport policy for the first decade of the twenty-first century, namely the systematic application of road pricing beginning with heavy vehicles and allowing for the charging of external costs. A proposal for a directive on the methodology to be used for estimating charges is currently under inter-departmental examination within the Commission. The second White Paper

proposal of relevance for Alpine transport is the intention of the Commission to declare specific regions as particularly environmentally sensitive and to consequently exempt them from strict adherence to European directives. This would for instance allow environmentally sensitive areas to apply higher road charges than 'standard' regions.

How conducive the above proposals turn out to be with respect to sustainability in the Alpine regions remains to be seen. Contrary to the nineties there is at present a wide consensus across Europe that road pricing is a 'good' thing. On the other hand, what the concept of 'environmentally sensitive' area should mean in practice and according to which criteria it should be granted remains rather unclear. It would seem, however, that the success of the concept of the environmentally sensitive area would largely depend on the success of European Alpine transport policy during the next decade.

3.6 The role of grassroots mobilisation at regional / local levels

There has been significant mobilisation in the Alps regarding transport especially in Austria and Switzerland, but also as of more recently in France. In all three countries mobilisation has been motivated by environmental concerns (cf. Lollive, 2002) albeit targeting primarily 'those coming from the outside' and, in that, transit traffic. It is probably for this reason that the Alpine region never emerged into a positively evaluated cross-border region considered as an opportunity – a construction which according to Trigallo (2001) has been the prime mover behind the realisation of several trans-European projects or the so-called 'missing links'. The mobilisation has furthermore been local. However in Austria and especially in Switzerland it was successful in increasing the publicity of this single issue thus influencing policy.

In **Austria** environmental concerns gained in significance during the seventies and the eighties, especially with regard to nuclear energy, waste disposal and agriculture. Activist groups and grassroots movements were founded and these initiated referenda and protest against those policies they did not agree with. The most successful initiative was that for a referendum against nuclear energy, which stopped the construction of the first nuclear power plant in Austria leading to an overall ban of nuclear energy; as well as the successful protest against a hydro-power plant near Hainburg which would have endangered the last wetlands of the Danube. These very successful initiatives of the environmental movement received wide media coverage, leading, in turn, to the strengthening of environmental consciousness among the population.

In the case of the Alps, the event which marked a turning point to active (and effective) mobilisation was the publication of the report on the Alpine forests in 1985, in conjunction with the realisation that the construction of the A4

motorway from the German to the Italian border did not in fact lead to any decrease in traffic, nor to a lessening of traffic burdens. Environmental grassroots movements proliferated across Austria and especially along the Brenner corridor crossing the Alps. In the late nineties there were around 170 registered environmental movements concentrating on transport & environment concerns.

Among the most important groups were the *Aktion lebenswertes Wipptal*, AUT – *Aktion Umwelt Tirol*, *Komitee Baumkirchen*, *Aktion Atemnot*, *Aktion Verkehr*, *Initiative Unteres Inntal*, *Grieb am Brenner* and *Medical Doctors for the Environment*. These movements received a new quality of organisation by joining forces under the umbrella of the *Transitforum Austria Tirol* which formed a common platform of action to represent citizens living in the Alpine area and concerned about transit traffic.

Subsequently local governments joined the debate either in support of citizen movements and/or by demanding a more formal role in transport decision-making. It was thanks to this mobilisation that the Green Party was successful for the first time in gaining seats in the Regional Parliament of Tyrol. Protest votes were also absorbed in part by the populist FPOE. These electoral results motivated the federal government (and its two constituent parties) to enter into negotiations with the European Union regarding a Transit Agreement (see above). The mobilisation of the Tyrolean citizens against transit traffic is in Austria perceived as the success factor in effecting the installation of the Ecopoint system. The *Transitforum Austria Tirol* is today still very active in lobbying for the extension of the Ecopoint system past 2003 and the imposition of even stricter restrictions on transit traffic through the Alps.¹⁸

The various citizen movements are not as clearly in favour of the construction of the Brenner base tunnel, despite this being a rail project. Many municipalities, especially those to be directly affected by the construction in the Unteres Inntal, share this opinion in a typical NIMBY attitude. On the other hand, the *Alpenfonds*, an umbrella association for representing the interests of the regions of Tyrol, Southern Tyrol and Trentino, have since a long time been mobilising in favour of new rail infrastructure through the Alps and, in this connection, for the use of revenues from road pricing – a proposal which is expected to materialise with the new Directive Framework on Pricing under preparation by the European Commission.

Equally if not more successful has been the environmental movement in **Switzerland**. It was this movement that was behind the Alpine Initiative which in

¹⁸ In fact the Transitforum and, until recently, the regional government of Tyrol are not so excited about the ecopoint system arguing that this was not really successful in reducing both transit traffic (the absolute number of crossings) and emissions. Both have been in favour of a stricter counting as well.

the early nineties succeeded to organise a popular vote on the problem of transit traffic through the Alps and, in turn, to introduce an article in the Swiss Constitution calling effectively for an investment stop as well as measures to reduce transit traffic and environmental emissions. According to Wicki (2002) this success is primarily to be explained by the good connections of the organisers to regional politicians, the media as well as political parties, especially the Social Democratic Party, with some of the organisers of the Alpine Initiative being members of this party and of the Federal Parliament. The Alpine Initiative remains active but its political influence has diluted since the popular vote of the early nineties and with the appropriation of its concerns in Swiss transport policy. For the most militant or devoted of its supporters this is proof of its failure rather than of its success.

In **France**, mobilisation around transport infrastructures is not new. The so-called 'territorialisation' of transport infrastructures (Ollivier-Trigalo, 2001) represented a source of conflicts to the implementation of major transport projects (like the TGV) but was often also a source of solutions. It gave rise to what Lollive and Tricot (2002) call the 'motorway counter-expertise' which influenced quite significantly the management of major transport projects during the nineties, including debates about the format and role of (environmental) public inquiries (Rui, 2001, 2002). The Mediterranean TGV as well as the Eastern TGV are exemplary cases. Ecological concerns were not foreign but also not central to this form of mobilisation. Perhaps also for this reason transport infrastructure in France was more frequently than either in Austria or Switzerland seen as an opportunity (for regional development) rather than as a problem (for life quality). This was also the case for the Lyon-Turin link which, as a result, quickly developed into a complex set of related and networked projects (Bernat, Fourniau and Rui, 1997). Despite the fact that both the costs and time framework of this project have been extended, its outcome could represent a multi-modal infrastructure network for both passenger and freight transport extending over a broad area which is more ecological and contributes to regional cohesion at the France-Italian border.

Different is the situation in the Chamonix area close to the Mont-Blanc road tunnel. There environmental mobilisation began already in 1991 following the decision of the French government to proceed with the construction of a second tube for the tunnel. The *Association for the Respect of Mont Blanc* (ARSMB) was not against the extension of the tunnel but wanted to ensure that the concerns of the area residents would be taken into account. When shortly afterwards the project was abandoned, the association began to mobilise against transit traffic through Mont Blanc in a manner similar to environmental associations in the Swiss and Austrian Alpine regions.

The closing of the tunnel for three years following a serious accident in March 1999 raised hopes among the supporters of the ARSMB that it would now be possible to effect a total stop to transit traffic through the Mont Blanc.

Mobilisation heightened during 2001 as the date of the opening of the tunnel approached: a petition calling for the banning of TIR trucks across Mont Blanc was signed by 200,000 people; a manifesto (Mont-Blanc Maurienne Aspe Valey) calling for a banning of heavy vehicles through Mont Blanc as well as a stop on road investments through the Aspe valley was signed by 125 associations; and finally at a referendum organised in the regions of Chamonix, Souches and Cervoz, 97 per cent of the residents expressed support for the above goals by answering 'no' to the following question: *'Do you think that the passage of international transport trucks crossing the Chamonix valley by road, via the Mont Blanc tunnel, is compatible with the preservation and conservation of the local natural and ecological features, and with the health and security of the local population and tourists?'* (cf. Grosjean, 2002). The referendum was declared illegal by the Administration of the Haute Savoie area but received wide media publicity. The initiative was copied in other regions. The Mont Blanc tunnel opened in April 2002.

4 A multinational agenda in search of a multilateral platform

The protection of the Alps is a concern shared across national administrations, regional authorities, local communities, the resident population and environmental movements. Despite this fact, most initiatives have tended to be national or local in terms of scope as well as scale and mode of organisation.

The similarities of the policy agendas as well as those of the environmental movements in the different countries raise the question about the existence and success of multilateral initiatives in the field of Alpine transport policy.

Two such initiatives at the political level have already been discussed, namely the Transit Agreements between the European Union and Austria and Switzerland respectively. Both, however, were negotiated according to the typical bilateral bargaining mode and as such do not probably deserve the term 'multilateral'. Characteristic in this respect is that even though the final phase of the negotiations of the Land Transport Agreement between Switzerland and the EU took place under the auspices of the Austrian Presidency, the Austrian government of the time did not use this as an opportunity to launch a more strategic coordination of Alpine transport policy. Indeed Austria, like the other EU Member States, was keen to see lifted the restrictions imposed on 40-tonne trucks through Switzerland and welcomed the Swiss ideas for the charging of heavy vehicles first, for having the 'side-effect' of removing pressure from itself about the reduction or 'stretching out' of its own charges and second, for

possibly offering the opportunity to re-negotiate the Ecopoint system at a later stage.¹⁹

At the political level the most noteworthy multilateral initiative is that of the Alpine Convention. The Alpine Convention was established in 1991 by Austria, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Monaco and the European Union. Its goal has been the sustainability of the Alps in a way respectful to the natural environment as well as the socio-economic needs of the resident population. The Alpine conference comprises the legislative body of the Alpine Convention and meets yearly. Seven of the signatory states of the Alpine Convention signed in 2000 the Transport Protocol which foresees the better coordination of infrastructure investments through the Alps; the favouring of rail over road regarding new infrastructures; and the financing of new infrastructure according to the 'polluter-pays' principle. Italy and the European Union have yet to sign the Transport Protocol.

The Alpine Convention has been less effective than it was originally hoped, an outcome well known from the literature on international agreements and explainable by the conflicts of interests of the signatory states. This is also why it took so long for the Transport Protocol to be formulated and signed. The original proposal to include in the protocol a call for a total stop of road investments was abandoned for the same reason. Another indication of the weakness of the Convention is that it only in 2000 agreed on procedures regarding dispute settlement and the establishment of a permanent secretariat.

At the administrative technical level, and under the auspices of the ECMT and Eurostat the Alpine countries have been seeking to harmonise their transport data collection systems (ECMT, 2001). The so-called CAFT survey was launched in 1999 for the first time with the participation of Austria, France and Switzerland. It was repeated in 2001. Italy has yet to agree to collaborate. The exercise has been welcomed as a step forward to the better understanding of Alpine traffic flows towards the coordination of policy. Recent attempts to coordinate more generally the scientific and technical work relating to trans-Alpine transport through the establishment of a trans-national Alpine Observatory have yet to bear fruit. Instead the various Alpine countries are

¹⁹ According to Hummer (1999), Austria in fact thought little about Alpine transport policy and the need to coordinate (at least with Switzerland) between 1993 and 1998: "Interessanterweise ist diese Erkenntnis, daß nämlich Österreich und die Schweiz verkehrsgeographisch und damit auch transitmäßig 'in einem Boot sitzen', in der österreichischen Öffentlichkeit in der letzten Zeit mehr und mehr in den Hintergrund getreten. Während man sich zur Zeit der Aushandlung des EWR-Vertrages und des Transitabkommens der engen Verbindung der Transitproblematik am Brenner mit der Verkehrssituation in der Schweiz noch sehr wohl bewußt war, betrieb Österreich danach eine reine ‚verkehrspolitische Nabelschau‘ und konzentrierte sich vor allem auf den (korrekten) Vollzug und die Überwachung des sog. ‚Ökopunkterege lung‘.

considering setting their own national observatories. Switzerland is in this respect the most advanced.

Environmental movements and local initiatives are also seeking to coordinate their activities. Three international non-governmental organisations are of particular relevance in this connection, CIPRA, ITE and T&E.

CIPRA, the *International Commission for the Protection of the Alps*, was established at the time of creation of the Alpine Convention and has till now been acting as the Observatory of the latter. ITE stands for *Initiative Transport Europe* and has since 1995 been endeavouring to coordinate the activities of associations operating in the Alpine region for the promotion of an alternative transport policy. ITE is closely collaborating with T&E, the *European Federation for Transport and the Environment*, which has its headquarters in Brussels and acts as an umbrella to several environmental associations, not solely Alpine specific.

The above organisations have been successful in terms of raising awareness and for increasing the publicity of the trans-Alpine transport problem. Their leadership is a comparatively small and well-knit network of young multi-lingual activists / professionals who have gathered extensive experience in lobbying at the European level and in various national environments. Their main problem in terms of the coordination of activities, especially if these were to go beyond the single-issue pressure movement idea, is a substantive one. Each of the individual association members of these organisations have been mobilising primarily against *transit traffic* – besides allowing for the useful combination of environmental with NIMBY concerns, this focus tends to obscure the cross-border network aspect of the problem.

5 In search of a European public interest concerning trans-Alpine transport

A consistent problem faced by European transport policy over the years has been the definition and operationalisation of the so-called 'European added value'. The reason for this has to do with the nature of the European polity. The European Union has assumed many functions of a (nation-) state yet its sovereignty is constructed according to the principle of subsidiarity. This requires the continuous negotiation and clarification of the legitimate areas of policy intervention for the European Union (through legislation, economic or other measures). Policy interventions from the European level are justified if there can be expected an added value from such interventions. Otherwise, decisions and implementation should be referred to lower levels, including the local level. Accordingly, the degree or type of intervention, but also the question

of responsibility and accountability for a decision, and the monitoring of its implementation – not least the financial implications, i.e. who pays and how much – can be determined.

That this is a far more problematic area than might appear at first sight is shown by the example of the TEN-T. Trans-national infrastructure investment plans aiming to achieve an efficient transport network for the whole of Europe are often operationalised in terms of ‘key links’ which in turn represent specific infrastructure projects in particular countries (for instance the Brenner tunnel) or cross-boundary projects (like the Lyon-Turin link). The evaluation of such projects is typically carried out at national level, often using national parameters that might not be adequate for measuring the degree of strategic impacts on a wider scale, or what is called network effects. Or if they do, the implications of the analysis with regard to the fair distribution of costs (according to benefits) are not considered. The failure of several TEN-T projects to be implemented reflects the failure to consider operationally their European-added value in the policy process and subsequently in their evaluation.

More generally, the last three decades of European transport policy show that specifying the European added value is much easier in the field of ‘negative integration’ corresponding to the removal of barriers to competition than in the field of ‘positive integration’ corresponding to the setting of standards (environmental, technical and the like) that aim at regulating the market towards sustainability or simply the avoidance of distortions to competition (Hix, 1999; Schmidt and Giorgi, 2002; Scharpf, 2001).

The failure to develop a European strategy to the problem of trans-Alpine transport exemplifies this problem in a particularly strong way. In principle there is wide consensus that transport through the Alps must be better managed and even significantly reduced to guarantee environmental sustainability, the life-quality of the resident population, and, in the long-term, the socio-economic viability of the region. The discourse on this problem has followed from quite an early stage a ‘global’ trans-boundary logic. The Alps is seen and symbolically represented as one mountainous region ‘suffering’ from extensive human exploitation in the form of transport. It is not the Austrian, French, Italian or Swiss Alps which face a problem but the Alps as a whole. Yet the solutions sought have clearly followed a national logic rooted in sub-national opposition. Furthermore, despite the parallel emergence of protest movements and the elaboration of national strategies, it has not been possible to coordinate initiatives, despite the entry into the policy arena of a supra-national actor through the European Union. Multilateral initiatives, like the Alpine Convention, have till now proved quite toothless. The trend towards harmonisation that can be observed as of very recently, for instance with regard to charges, is rather to be explained by the ‘reactive’ logic and as the response to unfortunate events like tunnel accidents.

Can or should one deduce from the above the failure of a *European* pro-active and strategic policy-making? Probably yes. This is however not equivalent to rejecting the necessity for a *European mode of governance*. Following the principle of subsidiarity this would in this case imply cross-regional and cross-national cooperation. Seeking local, national or bilateral solutions to the trans-Alpine transport problem only leads, as has been shown, to the reduction of the (environmental) public interest to exclusive, and hence conflicting, partial concerns – whether of the economic or environmental lobbies, those of the local populations, or of the national state administrations in charge of negotiating treaties or implementing policy proposals.

The European Commission is only now, rather belatedly, beginning to treat the Alpine transport problem as one requiring the coordination of policy. The explicit reference to environmentally sensitive areas as comprising special policy regimes in the White Paper on European transport policy could provide a basis for launching a useful debate in this connection. On the other hand, the way of negotiating the extension or not of the Austrian Ecopoint system suggests that the Commission is still keen to uphold the bargaining mode of policy coordination that it has till now followed.

Considering the record of the Commission in terms of agenda-setting in other policy areas, including the environment, this rather traditional view on the Alpine transport problem is rather surprising. On the other hand, treating the European Commission as a homogeneous institution is probably misplaced. After all, we should recall, the Commission is not an executive form of government as we know this from the national level. As a non-elected but nominated body, it in many ways reflects the variety of political ideologies to be found in EU Member States. In this mosaic, the ideology that has clearly dominated DG-TREN and European transport policy has been that of market liberalisation. Their understanding of governance and coordination is thus also quite tainted by economist viewpoints. Hence the current emphasis on pricing for resolving the transport problem, also in the Alpine region.

This, we would contend, will probably not suffice, however important. The coordination of policy towards sustainable mobility in the Alps will require establishing a supranational mode of governance which is based on multi-lateral rather than bilateral negotiation, which explicitly and honestly seeks to consider all viewpoints, including those of the resident populations, and which is based on transparent procedures and decision rules. Such a model of a supra-national mode of governance also implies allowing the agenda to be more open-ended than it now is, including for considering the now 'taboo' issue of imposing absolute restrictions on traffic through the Alps.

Despite it being a stronger supra-national body of decision-making than most others, the European Union has still to develop robust procedures for such a mode of governance. Clearly procedures are not the solution to all problems

and we are not suggesting that such procedures will make the real conflicts of interests regarding Alpine transport simply disappear. However, without such procedures the conflicts of interest are bound to sharpen, making the problem of Alpine transport an intractable policy problem with no prospect for a sustainable solution.

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Annex 1 - Summaries of Contributions and Discussions from the ALP-NET Workshop 3A

Session 1 – Cooperation and Conflict Across the Alps

Chair: Ronald Pohoryles, ICCR

Hauke Fehlberg of the Swiss Federal Office for transport spoke about the development of the land transport agreement between Switzerland and the EU and the first results observed from the implementation of the associated measures. (The full paper and presentation can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

Noël Lebel of the French Ministry of Transport stressed the need for a new form of multilateral cooperation between the Alpine countries. The unilateralism of the past sometimes made the countries victims of their neighbours' actions. The new European Commission White Paper on the Common Transport Policy (CTP) addressed the problem of trans-Alpine transport and will be the basis for the establishment of a more coordinated transport policy across the Alpine region.

Anna Panagopoulou of the European Commission (DG TREN) introduced the priorities of the new White Paper on the CTP. With regard to Alpine transport, the main issues to be resolved in the coming years are tunnel safety, the investment in infrastructure and the revision of the TEN-T guidelines, the development and effective use of intermodality through the Marco Polo Programme, and the pricing of transport infrastructure. Some good examples of cooperation between the Alpine countries have recently been emerging, most notably the common data collection exercises and Zürich initiative of Alpine Ministers of Transport.

Fabio Croccolo of the Italian Ministry of Transport stressed the fundamental right to mobility as set out by the EC treaty. This right has to be enforced also in the case of Italy. This is a common European problem and can therefore not be decided by a single region or a group of regions. A solution will have to bring about a two way solidarity: First from the central governments to the disadvantaged regions that suffer the consequences of transport and, second, from the local communities to the citizens of Europe. The infrastructure links currently under discussion, like the Brenner motorway or the Mt. Blanc tunnel, are part of the European primary transport network and were not designed or built for local use only.

Franc Žepić of the Slovenian Ministry of Transport presented the historical development of transport flows in the eastern part of the Alpine area. At the moment transit traffic is not making sufficient use of the Slovenian transport infrastructure. The European dimension of the problem is quite clear; new infrastructure projects are built with the international implications in mind. The port of Koper, for example, is already an

important port for much of the north-eastern part of Italy. Environmental Impact Assessments for new transport infrastructure projects are important but the rules should not be too strict.

Markus Liechti of Transport and Environment (T&E) portrayed the Alps as a complex organism. Thus policy making in this area has to live up to the same complexity and sophistication. Unilateral decisions by single countries will not maximise the overall welfare. The framework of the Alpine convention should be used to construct an effective multi-level system of interaction between the European, the national, the regional and the local levels as well as the citizens and the NGOs. (The PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

The following points were raised by the discussion in Session 1:

- 1) *The issue of multilateral consultation for transport policy making in the Alpine countries* – In the past, many of the transport relevant decisions taken in the Alpine countries were made in a very unilateral manner. This situation is currently improving but at the moment multilateralism works better in the formulation of transport policy than in actual short term decision making (Lebel). The exchange of information between the Alpine countries on the most recent developments, like the new charging and safety regime at the Mt. Blanc tunnel, has yet to be improved (Zauner).
- 2) *The future of the Austrian Ecopoint system* – At the moment the developments surrounding the future of the Austrian Ecopoint system past the end of the year 2003 are not clear (Balmer). The most likely outcome of the current negotiations will be a time limited extension of the system with some significant changes, like the abolishment of the 108% upper limits on the number of trucks. This temporary system will probably be replaced in some years by a new system of road user charging (Zauner).
- 3) *The new safety regime in the Mont Blanc tunnel* – The limitations on the number and size of trucks in the tunnel will include a minimum distance of 150m between trucks (this will allow for a maximum of 220 trucks / hour /direction), a 7 meter length limit and a regulation not allowing any two trucks going in opposite directions in the tunnel at the same time (Lebel).
- 4) *The potential of intermodal transport* – At the moment some of the intermodal services across the Alps (e.g. the piggy back train from Maribor to Wels) do not offer a sufficient quality of service to be able to compete with road transport (Bozicnik). In order to improve the situation a railway reform is urgently needed. This has to entail some liberalisation of railway services but it does not necessarily mean privatisation. If countries could establish effective authorities for regulation there could be competition on certain lines (Croccolo). In Switzerland there seems

to be a positive example of an international intermodal co-operation that is currently being established between the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland. A key factor in this integrated corridor management will be the question of interoperability (Fehlberg). This is also at the core of the new rail freight freeways that the European Commission is currently endorsing (Panagopoulou).

- 5) *The legitimacy of NGOs* – In many cases, NGOs oppose railway infrastructure as much as road infrastructure because they are focused on their local interests (Küchel, Zepic). This raised the question of the legitimacy which is clearly not limited to the EU institutions and other public institutions. But how is legitimacy to be determined? While representatives of public authorities seem to perceive legitimacy as directly related to the number of people represented by a certain NGO (Croccolo, Lebel), an alternative approach suggested by social science sees the NGOs more as a phenomenon of the public at large, independent of their actual number of supporters (Lolive). To ease the problem of legitimacy, it is important to think about ways to establish platforms for the co-ordination of activities between the NGOs and between the NGOs and the public authorities (Giorgi). A framework for such a co-ordination in the Alpine case could be created under the Alpine convention (Liechti).

Session 2 – The Policy Process in the Context of Multi-Level Governance

Chair: Liana Giorgi, ICCR

Christof Wicki presented the results of his work on decision making in Alpine transport policy and the role of actors. On the basis of empirical research carried out in Switzerland it can be shown what place the various actors occupy in a certain debate. The main results show a marginalisation of certain bottom up initiatives, like the "Alpeninitiative", in recent years. (The full paper can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

Michael Schmidt of the ICCR gave an overview of the history, the actors and the most recent developments of Alpine transport policy in Austria. The conclusion shows that within Austria the actors' interests are more complex than generally perceived. A common Austrian interest is in most cases difficult to identify. This is also part of the explanation why Austria's negotiating position via the EU and neighbouring countries has not always been as strong as possible. (The PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

François Grosjean of the FNAUT spoke about the citizen mobilisation in the Alpine valley of Chamonix. Mountain valleys are becoming more and more affected by the impacts of international transport. A ten year struggle by the local population to control the pollution from transport is now more active than ever. The reason is a feeling of

helplessness despite the experience gained from an extended public debate. The debate has now widened to include the entire Alpine Arc and Europe, creating a international network of NGOs and citizen movements. (The full paper can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

The following points were raised by the discussion in Session 2:

- 1) *The role of the Swiss Alpeninitiative and other non government activities in Switzerland* – The Swiss Alpeninitiative played a crucial role in the political debate leading up to the constitutional referendum on the article on the protection of the Alps. However, this influence could not be sustained in the years after the referendum. In terms of influence the Alpeninitiative and other non governmental initiatives and groups have become more and more marginalized in recent years (Wicki).
- 2) *The current citizen protests against the re-opening of the Mt.Blanc tunnel* – The NGOs are now making more radical demands on not allowing any heavy goods vehicle traffic in the Mt. Blanc tunnel; this is partly based on the hope that the results of the protests could be more positive if the demands are more radical (Zauner).
- 3) *Intermodal solutions for the trans-Alpine transport* – There is railway capacity to ease the problems with road transport on the Alpine crossings. Unfortunately the quality of service is not sufficient (Liechti). This mostly a problem of logistics; if society was willing to pay a higher price for more ecological transport it could certainly be done (Vanel).

Session 3 - Inclusion and Participation in Decision Making Processes

Chair: Liana Giorgi, ICCR

Sandrine Rui of the University of Bordeaux spoke about the possibility of the constitution of a democratic public space concerning Transalpine transport policy. The European legal frame and political intentions - as well as national ones - introduce the recognition of citizen participation in decision processes which have impacts on their frame of life. The development of concertation is an answer to the increase of public awareness of environmental degradation. But more generally, it is seen as a solution to address the deficits of the legislative framework that leads to question the legitimacy of projects and decisions. Ms. Rui's presentation examined the different dimensions of frustration. There are no citizens in concertation phases, but only social actors who defend their interests, who have social representations and values,. Then concertation -

as democracy - is less an idea than a work. (The full paper can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

Renate Zauner of the Initiative Transports Europe (ITE) reminded the audience that the only reason Alpine transport policy is so high on the political agenda and gets so much media attention is because of the regular citizen protests. The various local citizen movements have now joined together and are interested in a global solution to the problem of trans-Alpine transport. They are very much interested in a constructive dialogue and presented a number of innovative ideas for a better transport policy. A structure debate on certain projects should give all actors a voice.

Nick Tyler of the Centre for Transport Studies at the University College London presented the outcomes of two public participation exercises related to different transport-related decisions. In each case the experiment was directed towards real decisions: the public would have to live with the outcome. The main objective was to see how realistically the concept of public participation in public decisions could be achieved and what the costs and benefits would be of such an approach. The underlying participation philosophy was based on the definition of public participation as a process incorporating the direct involvement of the public in taking, sharing ownership of, and assuming at least part of the responsibility for, the resulting decisions. This research was conducted because the involvement of the public in decision making has become a major part of public political processes. For example, the UK government now requires evidence of public participation in the preparation of Local Transport Plans by local authorities, but does not stipulate how the process should be conducted. (The full paper can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

Andrew Nash presented a case study of the public input process used to refine alternatives being considered for extending commuter rail service to a new station in downtown San Francisco and describes its applicability to other large-scale transportation improvement projects such as new transportation projects in the Alpine region. The paper also outlined problems associated with the public involvement approach and suggests various improvements. (The full paper can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

The following points were raised by the discussion in Session 3:

- 1) *The role of citizen participation* – Citizen participation is usually a consequence of frustration with policy making in a certain area. In some cases frustration can thereby become a strong driver to policy making (Liechti) and lead to a more clearly pronounced and "better" conflict. On the other hand frustration can also feed populism (Rui) and could become a driver for radicalism that would not have occurred otherwise (Zauner). The political discussion should be linked to the concrete project level (Lolive) but nonetheless it has to be understood that the problems at hand are not of a purely technical nature but rather social as well (Zauner).

- 2) *How to design citizen participation* – The issue of communication between the politicians, the government experts, their consultants and the citizens is crucial. Any information provided to citizens has to be clearly understandable (Tyler) without neglecting the complexity of the subject at hand (Tzieropoulos). In order to improve the communication and the common understanding of the problem it can be useful to bring the discussion to a higher level, e.g. rather than discussing the technical details of a transport infrastructure project an assessment of the overall transport infrastructure needs of the region could be made (Tyler).

Session 4 – The Role of Experts in Decision Making on Trans-Alpine Transport

Chair: Michael Schmidt, ICCR

Ronald Pohoryles of the ICCR spoke about the role of experts in decision making processes. Who is to be regarded as an expert; this is largely based on the willingness and the subjective assessment of the person or organisation accepting a specific expertise. A case study from a road infrastructure project in Wels, Austria clearly shows that in the public perception expertise provided by NGOs is not always more credible or acceptable than expertise provided by government officials. Thus a major task in the evolution of the concept of governance will be the "democratisation" of experts and their expertise. (The PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

Jørn Cruickshank of Agder Research showed the benefits, but especially the incapability of instrumental transport research to come to grips with the problems in the transport sector. The presentation addressed the planning theory and Habermas' recipe for ideal speech as an attempt to facilitate participation and rational thought in the processes that construct reality. When there is a conflict of interests, Foucault position is more interesting, that regards this role for science as unsatisfactory, and argues for a more influential role for science. Striving to reveal power and provide inputs in a social dialogue is a more influential role for science, than the present dominating instrumental research. When conflicts are absent, instrumental rationality is very useful, but it is not adequate when goals contradict. If instrumental rationality is employed as the only approach, experts easily get the role of the scapegoat. (The full paper can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

Jacques Lolive of the Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour presented a paper on "The realisation of a trans-Alpine environmental expertise and its impact on project management in France" (co-authored by Anne Tricot). The presentation focused on the nature of conflicts related to major transport infrastructure projects (particularly motorways) in the Southern Alps. It analysed the main strategies of the opponents of the projects and the most common implications of conflicts of major transport

infrastructures in France: associations are trying to develop the strategy of counter-expertise. This expert-strategy is supplemented by a second strategy, which is more pragmatic, of taking advantage of environmental opportunities. Furthermore the paper analyses the emergence of an Alpine environmental expertise which is based on the emergence of trans-Alpine international associative networks (ITE and CIPRA). (The full paper can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website under www.alp-net.org)

The following points were raised by the discussion in Session 4:

- 1) *The distinction between research and expertise* – Expertise is directly relevant to decision making while research arrives at more fundamental results. Expertise is based on trust and the interaction between the experts and the ones whom they advise (Pohoryles). Unfortunately often research is mistaken as expertise and attempts are made by policy makers to apply it directly to certain problems. While there is a market for expertise there should not be a similar kind of profit oriented market for research (Reynaud). The "market" for research should rather function in a transparent way that allows society as a whole to benefit from the results obtained (Pohoryles).
- 2) *Expertise and counter-expertise on the project level* – In the recent past it seems to be more fruitful for citizen movements to attack transport infrastructure projects on an environmental and on a safety level rather than at an economic level. This applies not only for road projects but also for railway projects (Reynaud). Indeed many of the NGOs are more or less neutral towards the mode; only the specific problems caused by transport are considered. This is especially true for all international and Alpine projects. In France it can be observed that for purely national projects outside the Alpine areas there is still something like a shared view of a common interest between citizen groups and the administration (Lolive).

Annex II – Papers and Presentations presented at the ALP-NET Workshop 3A

The papers and presentations presented at the third ALP-NET workshop (Workshop 3A) can be downloaded from the ALP-NET Website (www.alp-net.org). The papers can also be read from the ALP-NET D4 Floppy Disk that forms Annex II of this document.