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Panel discussion on “The Use of Revenues from Road Pricing and Possibilities for Cross Financing”

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IRU's position on infrastructure charging is based on the principle of “NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL TREATMENT OF MODES”.

Regarding the use of revenues it contains the following clear statement:

“IRU OPPOSES CROSS FINANCING OF SUBSIDIES BETWEEN DIFFERENT TRANSPORT MODES”.

For road transport operators it is a very strange way of thinking that the taxes they pay are used to help other modes, considered as competitors. It is also difficult to understand why the ban on cross financing or cross subsidies in the treaty of Amsterdam should be lifted for such purposes. In any case the “user acceptance” of an infrastructure tax will be limited if use of the revenue for other modes of transport were to be accepted.

Anyway, we try to understand the background to the questions related to the use of revenues and cross financing. *Investing more in rail and inland waterways infrastructure the modal split will change*, is wishful thinking. *As a result road transport share will stagnate or decrease without spoiling the efficient freight transport system*, is a naïve hope.

Such hypotheses are fundamentally wrong. One of the best proofs, we find in the Alp transit:

There are today no rail infrastructure capacity constraints for a higher rail share of freight transit through the Alpine region. Through Gotthard, Brenner, Simplon, Semmering and Mout Cénis new slots for freight trains can be obtained, and this has been the case throughout the years. Never the less, rail transport decreased its share of the market by 1% every year. (slide 1)

If infrastructure charges are introduced as part of a sustainable transport strategy, the revenue must be used to support sustainable transport solutions. Using the IRU's 3-i strategy, you find the answers in slide 2 and 3. I shall comment on the individual elements.

Incentives to more environment friendly roads, lorries and safer transport operations are the answer. Including use for infrastructure and operations complementary to road transport, such as terminals for combined transport or new short sea crossings, which relieve the pressure on the roads.
