## EURACTIV STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE CITIES

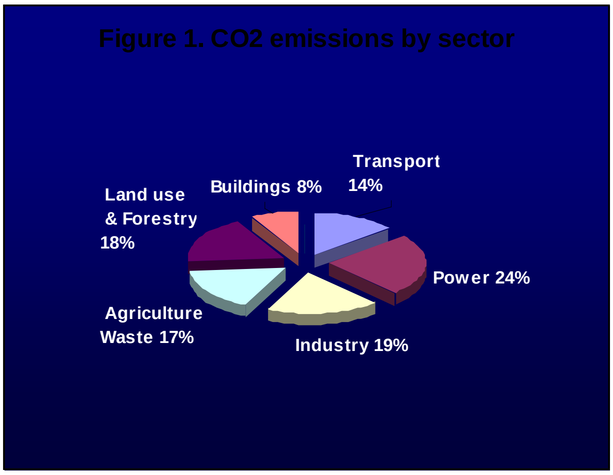
## BRUSSELS 22 MARCH 2007

Transport and Land Use are part of the solution to global warming, Intervention by Pierre Laconte, representing the European Environment Agency.

Political awareness about global warming has recently gained momentum, after years of adverse lobbying (see the 2007 UCS Report "Smoke, Mirrors & Hot Air – How ExxonMobil Uses Big Tobacco's Tactics to Manufacture Uncertainty on Climate Change"). The tobacco lobby, like the current sceptics of climate change refused to recognise the obvious links. Again, like the smoking issue, it's now public opinion that is pushing Governments to act on climate change.

Transport is responsible for 14% of all CO2 emissions (see figure 1 for industry breakdown) but growing fast. Unpacking at the transport sector's CO2 emissions at a regional level, reveals that North America contributes the largest part (39%), closely followed by Europe (19%). Given China's rate of projected growth in car ownership, it could soon take over North America's CO2 contribution.

Figure 1




Mitigation of the impacts is vital. Even with the prospect of cleaner vehicles, the projection of their growth (and use) in industrialising countries like India and China will outweigh any progress made through fuel efficiency gains in the West. Moreover cleaner vehicles don't take into account the impact of cars on the day-to-day liveability of cities and neighbourhoods.

The European Environmental Agency ( www.eea.europa.eu ) produced in 2006 the report "Urban Sprawl in Europe", which claims that sprawl threatens the very culture of Europe, as it creates environmental, social and economic problems for both cities and countryside.

In its Report ""transport & environment: on the way to a new Common Transport Policy" the Agency draws the attention on the present proposals to shift the EU's Common Transport Policy away from managing demand and onto transport's environmental impacts without curbing demand. Meanwhile European freight and passenger transport grow much faster than the economy as a whole, what clearly indicates a distortion in the market.

This abnormal growth is triggered by the fact that transport is not paying the external costs it generates. On the contrary, as revealed in the 3/2007 Technical Report "Size, structure and distribution of transport subsidies in Europe", transport subsidies amount to €280 billion per year, half of which go towards roads, i.e. 140 billion €.

A compulsory reduction of traffic by 1%/year could be coupled with a compulsory increase of Public transport use by 5%. This latest one was proposed in the European Parliament's resolution adopted on the initiative of Gyula Hegyi (PES, Hu) in response to the 11 January2006 European Commission's Communication on the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment (TSUE) See http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5319622 .

According to the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, proposed by the German EU Presidency (Ministerial meeting of 24 May), integration of urban planning and transport are essential to reduce transport demand. Higher densities are much less energy consuming and reduce the overall need for motorised transport.

This type of urban form is the result of a determined policy.

While free market is an instrument to regulate the economy and to stimulate creativity and productivity of companies, it is not an efficient mechanism for the organisation of cities. Cities require both regulation and market.

From Gore to Stern, reports have unveiled the future cost of business as usual policies. The emerging EU policy, as embodied by the conclusions of the March Brussels EU Summit, might perhaps form a new project for the 500 million European citizens.

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