

Brian Simpson

Well Chairman - oh dear a computer, that's disaster for me... First of all, if you want, to my speaking Lancastrian: I don't know if there is any interpretation available? I remember when I first went to the Parliament, somebody said to me: "Do you speak any languages?" and I said "I come from Wigan. We have difficulty with English But I will do my best".

The first bit is good news for Tom. After a long time of battling it looks like, Tom, that we're going to get the *[INAUDIBLE]*... Uuuuh! The problem for the rest of us is that links Birmingham with the rest of the world. And we'll have to live with that. But there we go!

Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much indeed for the invitation to come and speak to the EMTA conference here today in Birmingham. I wanted to try and give you, if I can, an overview of kind of what's going on, if you like, what's on my desk or what's on the committee desk coming on. And I think a lot of it fits in with what you're doing. But I've got to be honest. I'm one of those politicians who remember that certain speeches that stick in people's minds are usually the shorter ones. Tom mentioned my interest in the American civil war. And probably the greatest speech ever made was by Abraham Lincoln, and I think it lasted 52 seconds. Now I'll probably take a little bit longer than that and I think that Abraham Lincoln was a better speechmaker than I was. But I want to try and be brief from what I say because I see the importance of these events and you coming back to us, and you coming back with your questions and having the dialogue in that regard.

But I do think it's worth just recapitulating where we're at, in the European Union transport policy, in particular in the European Parliament. And I stress it because I represent the European Parliament and Heaven forbid that you should let me loose in the Commission! But... And sometimes, what the European Parliament sees is not necessarily what the European Commission or the member states see. So it's kind of a health warning, if you like. It's what the Parliament is looking at.

And I start with the... I'm kind of introducing all of this by the economic downturn, which is clearly having an effect on strategy and planning on the one hand, but certainly on delivery on the other. And one of the great battles I have, as a member of the Parliament and chairman of the Transport Committee, is to keep badgering the member states to deliver on promises they've already made on infrastructure projects. Now you would *think* that what a member state agrees with the Parliament that we put into place, the policies and the projects we would like to have, that then it would follow on and that the member states would see that through. Well, let me tell you, Ladies and Gentlemen, the *easy* bit is getting the member states to agree! The hard bit is getting them to implement. And I'll talk to you on that a little bit later. I just want to mention the rail recast and what we try to do in regards to railways.

Well, we found in recent months that the member states, instead of using the kind of economic downturn as an opportunity to look forward and plan for the future, have actually retrenched behind their national barriers. And none more so than here, it has to be said, in the UK. And they've started to look at just national schemes, rather than taking a pan-European view. And clearly we would like to see a more pan-European

policy focus develop. And we would clearly like to see infrastructure projects that have a wider European value. And I'll mention that in the complements next time I talk about the TEN-T and what is kind of planned for that and Parliament's position on that. But I thought it was important to just stress the scenario that we're in, with the economic downturn leading to a kind of retrenching of the member states behind their national borders, which means that taking a pan-European approach has become more difficult in the last couple of months. And that is one of the areas that we in the Parliament are very concerned about.

Following on from that as well, we would argue that *that* is meant, that the involvement of regions and cities is also retrenched. Not because regions and cities wanted to retrench, but because they'd been kind of forced to retrench. And one of the issues we discussed last week in the Parliament, amongst the senior members of the committee, was the need to involve the regions and cities *more*. Because we see the regions and the cities being those areas that can help us deliver the pan-European approach because, frankly, you're more *into* that, than the national governments usually are. So that is why this is a good opportunity for me to hear what you all want to say.

Now the areas of work that we're concentrating on... If I stick to... They're a lot, but I don't think you want to go into the noise regulation of congested airports. If you do, I'm more than happy to talk to you. But there are three areas I want to concentrate on. One is the TEN-T and the Connecting Europe Framework (known as the CEF), the commission White Paper on the strategy to... towards 2050, and the rail recast.

Now on the TEN-T we got, last week, the proposals from the Commission on the core network of the TEN-T. And allied to that is the central... There is the Connecting Europe Framework which leaks into that and looks at the finance and how we and what money will be made available. I want to say right at the outset, as far as the Parliament is concerned, we support the idea of core infrastructure roots. The reason for that is because money is tight. We need to take a strategy that highlights where the needs are and where the problems are and work on those. Plus, we know from our experience of the 1991 TEN-T guidelines, what we ended up with, frankly, was the member states and a lot of instances, MEP:s Christmas wish list, so we ended up with documents this thick. And very few of those have actually been fully delivered. A lot is still ongoing, even of the original fourteen projects.

So Parliament is keen to concentrate on specific core projects. And those projects, in order to get European money, should have European added value. As I said quite bluntly to the Latvian transport minister, I am not in the business of finding finance to fund *your* national development plan. The finance for your national development plan is a matter for Latvia. So what we are looking at doing is ensuring that European funding goes into those projects, that clearly deliver European added value. So what does that mean? Well, connectivity is a key component of that, particularly cross-border, particularly with railways.

It is still a complete bafflement to be me that in 2011 we have great difficulty getting railway locomotives and trains to cross national bordures. Now I know we've made progress. I know that after fifteen years there has been an agreement on whether we can have three red lights or one red light on the back of a freight train. And I know we've got services that *do* cross bordures: Thalys, Eurostar, and of course before them all, Belfast to Dublin. But in the main, as soon as you hit a national bordure, in railway terms you hit a problem. And so therefore there has to be a priority put on

that. In fact, I'll cite you one practical example of that. Spain built its high speed rail network from Madrid, AVE, from Madrid to Barcelona. The French TGV built its from Paris to Perpignan. But nobody built the bit in-between. And it is *that* kind of project we want to see delivered. It is the same with the crossings into Austria and Italy and for Germany to Switzerland, where the Swiss are far more advanced on delivering the trans-European network than the Germans are. So connectivity has got to be the issue.

If you look at other areas where we have a priority, the second one is tackling congestion. Now this comes in different forms. One of our priorities is Single European Sky and CESAR because of congestion in the air. I'll leave that. If anybody wants to talk to me about it, now they're more than welcome to do that. But in this forum I'm talking about congestion on land transport and in particular congestion in and around our major urban towns and cities. And that's where I see a role for you guys very much, in trying to influence how we can tackle that. And if we do, if we have it as a priority, how we can link the congestion in the urban areas with the other priority of linking in with the rest of Europe. So I'm sure there'll be a paper for me to look at from you at some point. But just think on that, at this moment in time, that here we are in Birmingham. How do we connect the congestion in Birmingham to the trans-European network so we get that European added value? I give you a clue West Coast main lines brings to mind. OK?

And then the other area of the TEN-T is the connection of the modes. It's very strong and very big on how do we link into ports? How do we link into airports? How do we link the land transportation and public transportation systems into those important elements of the wider European transport? Now it is a big difficulty in Birmingham to, you know, get them to link into a major sea port here, but you could see the way that we're thinking and the way that we're going in order that we can, if you like, re-connect Europe and have one kind of core transport network, not twenty-seven different transport networks that may, or may not, be connected.

Now on the finance side, we do know that 30 billion € have been allocated for this in the next ten-fifteen year-period. What is crucial about that... That's an increase in the finance we've had in the past. I would like it to be a little bit more. And with my other hat on, in agricultural and rural affairs, I could find a lot more money from agriculture and the common agricultural policy that we could be putting into transports. But you just have to take it from me that it will happen. But of that 30 billion, what is crucial, for the first time, 8 billion of that has been earmarked within the cohesion fund. And that's the massive fund. And that 8 billion has been earmarked for transport. Now some of these countries don't like that because they don't like to be told where they spend the cohesion funding. But we've had problems in the past with cohesion funding, where countries have had money and the infrastructure projects they built, particularly in Eastern European have been motorways, which is at odds with what our stated transport policy is and it also just benefits in the national aspect of the transport infrastructure, not the European one. And one of the other things that we've got, as Parliament insisted on putting it into the finance, is a use-it-or-lose-it clause. Now that really gets to member states to jump up and down. But we say if you don't use it, it doesn't still stay in your national exchequer, it goes back to Brussels so it can be allocated to those countries that can use it.

Return to the White Paper. The real key on that White Paper is urban mobility. And that includes the smart mobility that you have been talking about and the development of smart mobility and ITS and so on. And the interesting point of the

White Paper is that for the first time, there is a link in that White Paper between what we need to do on the environment and what we need to do on transport, but without the usual caveat that in order to environmental sustainability we have to stop people travelling. For the first time, the commission recognizes that you still have mobility, we still need mobility, and that mobility is not necessarily the point that brings us down in regards to the environment. And it looks like how we can look... How we can be doing that... The Daily Mail in Britain would have you believe that we want to ban all cars from city centres by 2050. That's not what it says. What it says is we work towards banning all *fossil fuel* driven cars by 2050, by developing other technologies, because fossil fuels are going to run out at some point. And it also encourages the use of public transport, where in particular a very... key area for me and that's the *integration* of public transport. And we still have some work to do in regards to that.

If transport for London will excuse me, I've been going around the world telling how wonderful the Oyster system is. And then they tell me: "Oh, we're thinking of changing that". So I don't know where we're at, with that. But I always put the Oyster system as the kind of system, as the system we should be using in our urban areas, type of Oyster system, where you can go from one mode of public transport to another on your Oyster – or whatever we call it.

We do know there is a need to concede to emissions and transport, Ladies and Gentlemen, it has got to rise to that challenge. We can't put our head in the sand. I think it would be a good idea some times if I got all the transport people and sat them in our environment committee for an hour or so. And then I think they would be far more sympathetic to what I say to them, than when they come to complain about me, about: "well, we can't do this, we can't do that..." But the move is still there for sustainability and reducing CO₂, so we as Transport have got to react to that and we've got to work with that.

I think we need to work more closely with the cities and the regions on the White Paper because you are the guys who are going to deliver. You are the guys who are going to deliver all the things we would like. And I think... We certainly, in the European Parliament, would welcome a vigorous input from the likes of EMTA, from the likes of the PTEG¹ and people like that so that, so we know what you're actually thinking and the practicalities of how we can put these things into practice, rather than just the wonderful... the theories.

And the final point I want to make about the White Paper is the need to link transport with economic and social planning and to link transport with what it can deliver in economic and social terms. Transport, I think, has undersold itself in the past, as to what it can do for economic growth, and for what it can do for social inclusion. And I think people are now beginning to recognize that. And I think we need to work with commerce and industry in order to get that message across, that good public transport leads to economic growth and leads to social inclusion.

On the rail recast, the Germans have tried to speed it up a little bit... like the train from Wellington this morning. We have to ask: why did we have a recast in the first place? Well, that goes back to the original problem I started with. We had a recast in the first place because a great deal of Members States – twenty something of them –

¹ PTEG passenger transport executive group www.pteg.net

failed to implement the first railway package. And why was that? I don't know what it is about railways, but I sit on my chair in the Parliament and all the other votes on all the other transport matters, you can see the political parties clearly: from right to left to green to liberal. But when it comes to railways, that goes apart. And the Germans always vote the same way, and the French always vote the same way, and the Italians always vote the same way. The lobby power of the railways astounds me at times, I have to say. And the attitude that we've had from the railways in the past – and this is a railway guy, this is the guy with steam in his veins – has always been, will always get nine reasons why we can't do something, rather than one reason why we can. And if anybody ever mentions the cost, they just... [INAUDIBLE]. So we face a problem there, from national lobbying.

And where are we now? Now we're looking, we'll vote next week in Strasburg on the committees' recommendation and there is still a problem on cross-subsidization. Here we are, 2011, and we still have a problem in the railway sector on cross-subsidization! Why? Because the infrastructure management at the German railways actually does pay some money towards German DB itself. And we need to get away from that. Because the next step, the unbundling as well, of infrastructure manager from operator, where you get the situation in Britain where you've got the network rail and the rail regulator, where we constantly complain about... for not talking to the operators. And you get some countries, where the rail regulator and the infrastructure manager is one man and his dog in an office that's been lent to them by the main railway operator. So we've got to try and solve that out.

The next step will be a new railway package, and that will include the liberalization of the domestic passenger market. So you can see now the battle lines being drawn in certain countries in regards to that. I mean as an aside as well, just to let you know, that the Commission now starts legal proceedings against the UK and France over restrictive practices on Eurotunnel. Seems some point of view we need to reform the Treaty of Dover. I've often thought, for those of you who seen the British program where you've got to get zero points: if anybody sets as a treaty which nobody knows about, the treaty of Dover might be the one to win 5,000 £ jackpot. For the treaty of Dover is the one regarding to the Eurotunnel.

So, Chairman, my conclusions: We've got busy times in the transport committee. But I want you to use some new things. We have got a new airport package coming up, covering noise, drone handling, slots... Interestingly enough, we've already had one strike on the airport package, even though it's not yet come out. We've got ETS problems in aviation, the commission heavy guy who succeeded where no other diplomats ever succeeded, in getting China, Russia and America to all agree a particular view. We've got the TEN-T and the Connecting Europe Facility that I've talked to you about, with the important White Paper, both of which affect yourselves. We've got the seafarer training and incorporation into guidelines... Well, let me tell you guys, if you think land transport moves slowly, you're going to start early with the IMO. The IMO makes a snail look like a TGV. And we're also reviewing the agencies that we have, EMSA, ERA²... and their roles, their regulatory roles in the future.

At a time of financial difficulty, Ladies and Gentlemen, among member states in activity, the cooperation of groups like yours, like EMTA, is important for us in the European Parliament. We are very keen to hear your views and to receive your views

² EMSA European Maritime Safety Agency, ERA European Railway Agency

and we are very keen to try and implement the policies that you will be able to deliver. And in that regard, the close cooperation has to be a key. For one of the reasons why I am here today is because I do see that this is important. We meet on a regular basis in Brussels at executive level, but it is important to meet the masses as well, as they say. And I look forward to your questions and any comments you wish to make. But please rest assured: my door in Brussels is always open. I'm a phone call away and I firmly believe that, working together, we *can* deliver a pan-European transport network that not only we can be proud, but that will deliver safe, efficient, affordable transport system for the general public. Thank you very much.