



24-27 MAY 2009

**THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC REPERCUSSIONS OF THE EUROPEAN
SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT POLICY**

**DELEGATES' WELCOME — WELCOMING ADDRESSES AND
INTRODUCTORY SPEECHES
MONDAY 25 MAY 9:00-10:00**

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The **Asecap Days 2009** are **centred** around the **socio-economic repercussions of the European Sustainable Transport Policy**: Never before, in the face of the international financial crisis, have the objectives of sustainable transport – consistently pursued by the European Union – been so interconnected with the socio-economic framework as much as now. This presents an unfavourable background that may require certain objectives to be re-analysed in the light of the fact that, even when the crisis has been overcome, the economic fundamentals of our society will be changed and will somehow have to be recalibrated.

The road transport sector is particularly involved in the recent developments in European policies: The progressive development of the EC transport policy, existing since the Treaty of Rome, was particularly evident during the 1990s with the creation of the Single Market and the Trans-European Networks, and its evolution has continued at a fast pace during the past few years through an extensive series of initiatives introduced by the European authorities. It has now reached maturity: telepayment, Eurovignette, Greening Transport, Intelligent Transport Systems and road safety are very topical themes, which involve our sector with a continuity and an intensity that were unimaginable just a few years ago. Moreover, 2009 has initiated a period of profound reflection for all EC institutions, including on transport policy. Soon there will be a renewal of the parliamentary legislation, followed by the nomination and designation of new members of the European Commission, all against the background of profound changes on a global level, largely due to the international financial crisis, and the imminent expiry of EC programmes and policies which have to be relaunched and renewed. We know that, particularly in view of the new perspectives of the EC transport policy, the European Commission is engaged in drafting a new White Paper on Transport Policy, the EC's Fourth Road Safety Action Programme, and in revising the guidelines on the Trans-European Transport Networks, as well as implementing an EC Plan for the development of the ITS. All this is being done with a view to surmounting the financial crisis and encouraging the recovery of the European economy, as the Commission itself stated in the Action Plan for the Economic Recovery of Europe, adopted last March, in which transport and especially the policy of the Trans-European Networks play a predominant and significant role.

Tolls are assuming an ever more significant role: While recourse to tolls characterised the policies of some European countries in the post-war period – as is the case for the countries which at that time founded Asecap – it has gradually been assuming an increasingly important role. Indeed, while the networks of those countries – franchised networks – have increasingly expanded, at the same time other countries have started to use tolls with different schemes, depending on their history and their socio-economic circumstances. Networks managed in different ways now coexist in Europe. Even though they are managed with different technological equipment, they can be made interoperable, and they are united by the toll concept, by the concept of *pay per use*, and by the concept that resources are not infinite and that it is essential to use innovative financing instruments. This sector will probably see further expansion, since the European policies aimed at ensuring interoperable toll payment services will result in the introduction of further elements to the sector. Asecap itself incorporates different experiences and allows different parties to meet, talk, exchange experiences and work together for the common good.

Asecap's presence in Brussels is becoming increasingly important: In the light of what has just been said, Asecap's presence and role are increasingly in demand in the preparation of strategic documents, such as the one relating to long-term transport policy. Indeed, Asecap has played an active role in Focus Groups set up to study the future of this policy, and also in strategic initiatives such as e-call, in European projects, committees and working groups. The presence of high-level representatives from European institutions has become a constant feature of the Association's annual days. It is therefore increasingly necessary for an organisation such as Asecap to act as a “transmission chain” between its members and the European institutions. The themes of European politics are many; they are in continuous evolution and require an active and effective presence by Asecap and its members to follow their rapid developments.

Our sector requires strong cohesion on the European level: The sector of toll motorways in Europe needs to maintain a strong cohesion. It must be able to carry out its activities in a climate of legal certainty and certainty in the future, to prevent the occurrence of national situations which cause the operators, the motorway concessionaires, to be affected by legislative provisions or by stances adopted by the national governments without evaluating their negative effects (as occurred in Italy three years ago as a result of a series of actions instigated by previous government bodies which were then progressively eliminated by the following administration). Thus confidence will be restored in the road sector as a whole and it will be allowed to carry out its activities as far as possible in conformity with the objectives of European transport policy and the correct functioning of the Internal Market. Here too, a role or vocation can be found for Asecap as common spokesperson at EC level for the legitimate concerns of its members.