ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics

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TRANSPORT SITUATION IRELAND IN 2008

1.   Traffic trends

The most recent statistics available relate to 2007
(http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/transport/2007/transport07.pdf).
2007 saw strong growth in road traffic volumes.

The number of cars registered increased from 1.78 million vehicles to 1.88 million in 2007. Using average annual mileage figures for estimates would suggest this means that total car km for the national fleet have increased from around 30 billion km per annum to almost 32 billion km per annum. Freight tonne km increasing by 8% to 19.2 billion tonne km. The impact of this in terms of energy demand within transport sector was that energy demand increased by 5.3% in 2007 compared to demand in 2006.   The indications for 2008 are that there will be a marked reduction in freight tonne km (due mainly to the impact of much reduced construction activity). Vehicle purchases in 2008 are also much reduced compared to 2007. For the period Jan-Oct 2008 new car sales stood at 145,000 compared to 177,000 for the same period in 2007. This, and weakened fuel sales for 2008, would suggest that the increased demand seen in 2007 will not be repeated this year.

In terms of public transport, total passenger journeys by state company bus services increased from 238.4 million in 2006 to 243.3 million in 2007. The number of km travelled in service by state buses increased from 151.5 million in 2006 to 156.2 million in 2007. Initial indications for 2008 are that bus passenger numbers have declined, again as a result of general economic climate.

Light rail passengers in Dublin city increased from 25.8 million passengers in 2006 to 28.5 million in 2007.

Other rail passenger journeys also increased from 43.4 million passenger journeys in 2006 to 45.5 million passenger journeys in 2007.

Rail freight continued to decline, with 129 million tonne km carried in 2007 compared to 207 million tonne km in 2006. A large part of this decline is directly attributable to the ceasing of sugar beet processing in Ireland, a product which was transported by rail.

Again, initial indications would be that the growth seen in passenger demand for public transport in 2007 will not be repeated in 2008 due to the markedly changed economic environment. The evolution of demand over the coming years would appear to be strongly dependant on economic circumstances, and in particular to what extent the construction sector recovers.

2.   Obstacles to the development of transport

Ireland traditionally had a low investment in its roads infrastructure principally due to a continuing lack of available funds for investment in the period up to the 1990s. In the last 10/15 years the Irish economy has grown very quickly and the demand this has placed on all public utilities led to serious concern that such lack of investment would hamper the sustainability of this economic growth.

The Irish Government committed itself to address this situation with a series of strategic initiatives including a National Development Plan that was completed in 2006, and a more recent initiative known as 'Transport 21', which provides, inter alia, for a total Exchequer investment of over €16 billion in roads infrastructure over the period 2006-2015. A total of almost €1.674 billion was expended in 2008 – marginally less than the 2007 final outturn figure of €1.759 billion.

The Government, appreciating the need to have high quality infrastructure in place to capitalise on an economic upturn, has maintained its commitment to fully implementing the ambitious national road upgrade programme provided for in 'Transport 21'.

3.   Best practices in transport and infrastructure regulation

With regard to transport infrastructure, please highlight major developments concerning **"E" networks,** provide the latest available information on **infrastructure investments** in terms of % of GDP in your country, and describe the measures taken in 2008 aimed at **promoting infrastructure investments** (targeted taxes, road funds, regulatory reforms to encourage private investment,....) which could also be of interest to other countries.

Under 'Transport 21' the provision of a high quality dual carriageway/motorway standard network is the focus in the period to the end of 2010. This network is designed to provide fast, safe routes linking the principal towns and cities of Ireland directly with the capital, Dublin, to assist in regional development and market access.

Known as the Major Interurban Routes (MIUs) – these routes are:

> ➢   M1 Dublin to the Border with Northern Ireland (completed 2007),
> ➢   N4/6 Dublin/Galway,
> ➢   N7 Dublin/Limerick,
> ➢   N8 Dublin/Cork &
> ➢   N9 Dublin Waterford.

Significant progress continues to be made on the delivery of these roads. At the time of writing all are on time, and on budget, for delivery by the end of 2010.

During the course of 2008 significant progress continued to be made in delivering on this plan:

> ➢   140 kms of motorway were opened to traffic.
> ➢   140 kms commenced construction.
> ➢   465 kms were at various stages of construction.

Additionally, 10 sections of high quality dual carriageway (over 250kms) were re-designated from high quality dual carriageways to motorway status during 2008. This re-designation will serve to protect the State's investment in these roads whilst also improving safety and journey time predictability

In August of 2008, a technically advanced Barrier Free Tolling system was introduced on the M50 (Dublin Ring Road) resulting in significant journey time reductions along this strategically vital route.

The implementation of Directive 2002/59/EC, as well as provisions contained in other EC legislation, requires the *collection and distribution* of various kinds of data. It concerns vessel traffic monitoring, dangerous cargo details, security status, results of ship inspections and information related to ship waste and cargo residue. SafeSeasIreland has improved data exchange with better standardisation and a profusion of transfer mechanisms - from phone or fax to electronic messages (via XML schema). SafeSeasIreland will contribute to the efficient implementation of the EU maritime safety legislation now and going forward.

In addition, SafeSeasIreland has been designed to allow, as necessary, additional services to be provided for a large community of users with the objective of contributing to the implementation of other community policies such as environmental protection, the security, immigration, etc.

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