

## TRANSPORT SITUATION IN NORWAY IN 2005

### ***1. Traffic trends***

We do not yet have a complete picture of traffic development in 2005. However, trends seem to indicate the following:

- A continued increase in *road transport*, particularly for heavy vehicles.
- An increase in *rail transport*, both for passenger- and freighttransport. After several years of declining market share compared to road transport, 2004 showed an increased market share. This seems to continue in 2005. However, it should be noted that the rail-network is limited, and road has a significantly higher share of transport activity than rail. Measured in passenger- and tonne kilometres, road outweighs rail by about 17:1 for passenger transport and 7:1 for freight transport.
- A continued increase in *maritime freight transport* to and from Norwegian ports.
- A continued increase in *air transport*, most significantly for international flights.

A continued increase in rail and maritime transport depends among other factors on the availability and competitiveness of combined transport. Combined transport plays an important role in Norwegian transport policy.

### ***2. Obstacles to the development of transport***

Given Norwegian geography, climate and population distribution, both transport and infrastructure development and maintenance continue to be expensive. A limited rail network and roads of varied quality create obstacles for heavy vehicle transport. Some airports are located in sparsely populated areas, but are nevertheless important.

Road congestion is a problem in major cities and on some important routes. Temporary congestion problems occur as a result of weather conditions or holiday traffic.

New measures for enhancing maritime security impose severe challenges on ports and the maritime industry. The fact that the costs are fully financed by user charges, may contribute to a decline in maritime transport.

### ***3. Best practices in transport and infrastructure regulation***

#### Road safety

A penalty point system was introduced in 2004, designed to cover traffic violations constituting serious hazards to road safety. Violations leading to penalty points include speeding, dangerous overtaking, violating priority rules and driving against a red light.

An independent research body is currently evaluating the penalty point system, specifically its effects on driver behaviour and road safety. So far, the evaluation indicates that the public generally comprehend and appreciate this measure. The evaluation will continue until 2007.

### New organisational models – public transport

Based on an invitation from the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the cities of Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger and Kristiansand have introduced new organisational models for a four-year trial period. Traditionally, local, regional and national authorities share responsibility for land use and transport policy. The new model, however, allows for a greater degree of local decision making. By giving local authorities the necessary resources and authority, the quality of services offered to travellers is expected to improve. By the end of 2005 we see an observable tendency towards increased local efforts to improve public transport services.

The objective of this project is

- improved coordination of land use and transport policy in urban areas
- better use of total public resources allocated to road transport and public transport (across the different levels of authorities), and
- to see if alternative organisational models meet environmental- and congestion challenges more effectively than the present model.

The trial period began in 2004 and will be evaluated after maximum five years.