ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT POLICY IN POLAND

Magda Stoczkiewicz
Polish Ecological Club

Background overview:

The countries in transition are in a special situation, in that they are experiencing a huge increase in road traffic, combined with a fast decline of rail and public transport. Another aspect of the special situation is that these countries still have a chance to avoid getting stuck in the quagmire of over-dependence on road transport, with the well known negative consequences. Countries in transition can learn not only from the Western European countries situation, but also from the current developments in the Cohesion countries, where the trend towards one-sided (road-oriented) investments has just set in, and environmental and social problems are just developing. If the countries from the CEE region aspiring to become EU members are forced to go through the same traditional way of enlargement, we will not be able to use our existing possibilities. Consequently we will find ourselves stuck in the same trap that many western countries are in, where it is too late to protect anything and the destroyed public transport or rail systems have to be rebuilt now, sometimes even from scratch.

At the moment we face a few similar trends in transport, appearing in most of the countries in the CEE region. They are among others: rapid increase in motor-vehicle traffic, and decrease in the funds devoted to the expansion and maintenance of public transport, which brings about continuous deterioration of the latter. On the other hand a shift to individual and freight automobile transport is being supported by growing investments in its environmentally and socially damaging infrastructure. The current ideas on transport development come mainly from politicians, governments, and the pro-motor-vehicle lobby. It is also true that for our societies in the CEE region owning a car is still a status symbol and people are being convinced, by aggressive advertising in the media for example, that there is no other convenient way of travelling. This approach needs a lot of work to be changed.

Situation in Poland:

The existing transport network in Poland has a number of advantages which give it a good position in Europe. The inherited shape of the road and rail transport network is satisfactory. The urban and out-of-town public transport network (buses, trams, trolley-buses), in spite of negative factors influencing them in the last few years, still pose essential advantages for transportation services. Urban mass transport companies operate in 272 cities of 18 million 870 thousand inhabitants (49% of the population). The existing network of pedestrian arteries, especially in urban areas and the tradition of big pedestrian traffic may be a base for the development of this most natural way of communication. Pedestrian communication uses 35549 km of pavements.

Altogether the existing transport network, maintained and slightly developed could serve for sustainable transport needs.

In recent years we have observed a few general trends in transport in Poland.
a). Increase in usage of cars;
b). Worsening of the railway situation;
c). Change in a share of mass transport;
d). The emphasis on big investments at the cost of local ones.
Let me elaborate a bit on these trends:

The first one is an increase in usage of a car manifesting in an increase in traffic volume. The number of cars owned by households has grown significantly. The level of transport pollution depends mainly on the number of cars. The impact of the road transport on an environment to some degree depends on the quality of motor vehicles. The quality is strongly related to the age of the motor vehicles. In Poland 78% of the cars are more than five years old.
Motor-vehicle transport is the most important danger to the environment and people in cities. It results from the fact that peoples' lives in a city concentrate around streets, where the impact of road transport is the biggest. In Kraków permanent measurements of pollution showed that levels of pollution nearby, and in the streets, are many times higher than in other places. Buildings are barriers for pollution, and they make rarefying it impossible. Similar situation occurs in villages and forest areas as well as in valleys.
Every year on the roads in Poland several thousand people die, as a result of tens of thousands of accidents. Tens of thousands of people are injured. The accident rate in Poland is 3-4 times higher than in the EU countries. Although in the last few years the number of accidents has fallen down, every day in our country 14-15 people die on the roads, and about 150 people go to hospitals. To show the scale of the problem it is important to realise the following numbers; every month on our roads dies the staff of an average size factory, every year inhabitants of a small town, and victims of accidents would fill all the hospitals in an average voivodeship. Estimated national economic losses caused by premature deaths, permanent injuries, and absence from work are bigger than the spending of the national budget for social welfare and medical services. Losses of the economy generated by accidents in 1995 amounted to about 20% of national budget in that year, and 3 times more than the intake of the budget from road transport.
The second trend is the worsening of the railway situation. At the same time that the road traffic has been growing, the length of railway lines, railway freight and passenger traffic has declined. Decreasing share of the railway in transport (a decrease by 32%) - especially in the 90s' - enables authorities to make decisions about cuts in railway lines, which leads to further limitation of the railways' role. PKP (the state owned railway company) has to finance the maintenance of its infrastructure, and finance the development of new infrastructure on a regional level in a significant part. For that reason, the railway is in a worse situation than the road transport companies because maintenance of roads is financed by every tax-payer. For the same reason, a financial result and a profitability of the railway are distorted so PKP considers cuts in regional lines. This situation is an effect of an unfair competition between the railway and road transport, because the railway in a higher degree bears costs generated by itself, while road transport practically does not have to cover costs generated by itself.
Nevertheless we should not forget, that the bad performance of PKP is caused not only by the government's policy. PKP is very inefficient, for instance a ratio: freighted goods (in tons) to

number of employees are two times lower than for the German Railway and the French Railway, and three times lower than for the Swedish Railway.
If we consider a distinction between public and individual transport we will see that the share of public transport in the whole transport is lower than in previous years. Not only has railway passenger traffic declined, but in recent years bus companies carried fewer passengers than before. *This change in a share of mass transport is the third trend.* Out-of-town bus transport companies (mainly owned by the state bus company) are carrying fewer and fewer passengers. More than 70% of the buses are five years old or older. The share of public transport in urban areas fell down, too. But newer data for Kraków seems to suggest that this trend has been slightly upturned. There are also some new initiatives to improve urban transport, like a fast tram in Krakow or promotion activities in Wroclaw. Public transport becomes more expensive and motor-vehicle individual transportation becomes cheaper. In 1985, for the price of one litre of fuel it was possible to buy 20 tickets of urban communication, in 1998 1 and a half tickets.
The forth trend is the emphasis on big investments at the cost of local ones. In railway the Government supports only (by subsidies and guarantees for loans) development of fast train connections among big cities and main national lines.
The most extreme example of this emphasis on big investment is the Motorway Building Program. It is visible that during the last few years the quality of the road network has become worse. The Transport Ministry (in 1994) estimated that 29% of Polish roads should be repaired. But surprisingly enough, the government does not propose maintenance for the road network, but huge new investments in motorways. Politics forces the Motorway Building Program and big road investments, (in perfect accordance with such politics' ideas is an interest of motor-vehicle lobby). At the same time local transportation systems especially important for everyday life of a society are being degraded. The examples are local railway lines and public urban communication. In 1990 the government stopped supporting urban public transport companies by funds for a new rolling stock. It brought about a crisis in production of the rolling stock, and degradation of local public transport systems in the country.

Governmental Transport Policy

In the common opinion of environmental NGO's, the Ministry of Environment in Poland follows the Transport Ministry in every strategic decision. The test for a weakness of the Ministry of Environment was a fact that the Ministry acknowledged roads as less harmful for the environment than the railway. It accounted the construction of long run railway lines as particularly harmful to the environment and human health, while the most dangerous type of transport for the environment - road transport - was classified only as potentially harmful type of economic activity. The real activity of the Ministry of Environment is still to minimise environmental damages of economic activities already undertaken, not to promote environmentally sound solutions.
In the 1980s special legislation on protecting the environment was accepted by the Polish Parliament. In 1991 the Parliament approved of the so-called Environmental Policy. This document describes the most general framework for the state's ecological activities. With reference to transport, it is asserted that the State should favour clean transport and especially public transport. In October 1994 the Act on Toll Motorways was passed by the Parliament - that is the starting date of the so-called Motorway Building Program. In May 1995 a new act

on the railway was passed. It provides a new way of railway financing. Only investments into new lines of national importance are financed from the budget. Maintenance of those lines and investments into other lines and their maintenance have to be financed by PKP on its own. In July 1995 the Transport Policy was accepted by the Government as its official document. It is worthy to note that the most general document determining national transport policy was accepted only after the Highway Program had started. That is a clear sign that motorway building has a priority in Poland and even more ridiculously does not even follow a logical procedure. In January 1996 the Government decided to establish a network of express roads 6770 km long with 2600 km of motorways included in this number.

From an environmental point of view an interesting aspect of the declared Transport Policy, prepared by the Government, is its accordance with ecological requirements. The content of this document seems to be in accordance with the idea of sustainable development. It is aimed at

- maximising benefits for the whole society from transport
- improving financial conditions of the transport sector
- solving social and ecological problems of Poland
- decreasing the distance between the European Union and Poland

Nevertheless it was attacked by experts from ecological organisations for at least four reasons:

a) because of its inconsistency - it is impossible to satisfy demands of an individual motor-vehicle transport, and environmental requirements,
b) because of the stress laid on the individual motor-vehicle transport instead of public transport,
c) economic functions of motorways were questioned, too.

In one sentence: the Transport Policy asserts that we can reconcile development of the individual transport with a sustainable development - which is false.

A number of specific objections were formulated too:

- the Government is going to reduce about 6000 km of railway lines without substantial arguments,
- the Government is going to subsidise road infrastructure, and decrease subsidies to railway infrastructure, so conditions of competition between these types of transport will be unfair,
- the government does not take into account external costs of transport, which are much higher for road transport - this means that road transport is subsidised by the whole society which has to bear these costs.

Currently the implemented state transport policy is limited to modernising and constructing roads, motorways, and fast train lines and making cuts in the remaining railway lines.

The Motorway Building Program

The Motorway Building Program is one of the declared and real priorities of the Polish Government. An additional context of this program is the Trans-European Road Network (TERN). Polish aspiration for membership in the European Union causes the Polish Government to perceive TERN (and motorway A2 and A4 as parts of it) as a tool of the integration.

The Motorway Program is supported by special legislation - its base is the Act on Toll Motorways. This act provides for the Agency for Motorway Construction and Maintenance,

and special procedures for a motorway construction. Its legal structure is aimed at a very quick and easy realisation of the program.
The largest part of the motorway network was supposed to be constructed in the so-called BOT (build-operate-transfer) system. Concessionaires will build motorways using their own or borrowed resources (it is assumed that motorway construction will last 15 years), and after that for a period of about 30 years they will maintain the motorways and charge tolls. After 30 years the motorways will be transferred to the state. Nevertheless a construction of about 350 km of motorways is financed directly from the State budget (A4 mainly). The Government borrowed money for these parts from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank.
Besides the State will certainly be financially involved at the first stage of the motorway construction in the BOT system. The Agency for Motorway Construction and Maintenance will buy land for the motorways. The Agency will pay for preparatory works (for instance archaeological works, costs of concession procedures and so on). This cost is estimated at 5% of the total cost - it is about $400 mln. Another kind of state financial participation - guarantees for concessionaires - is provided by the Act on Toll Motorways, but the Government is not obliged by the Act to use this mechanism. As the construction of 1 km of a motorway costs more than $3 mln, the total value of the Program is estimated at at least $8 billion (not less than $500 mln a year). New activities are being carried out at the Ministry of Transport, to change the Act on Toll Motorways in such a way, that the financial involvement of the State in motorways building could be higher. It is connected to the fact that most of the planned motorways are not economically viable and there are no concessionaires who would like to bear the risk of building a motorway.

Alternative Transport Policy:
The governmental Transport Policy is not acceptable from the environmental point of view. It was developed and accepted for implementation under the traditional formula. The policy assumes a doubled increase in the number of cars within the next 20 years and further continuation of the trend of the domination of trucks over railway in freight transport. It is not envisaged that public transports will have a bigger impact. Also riding a bicycle or walking are not considered viable means of transport. The motorways and highways, as well as railway inter-city connections are to play a dominant role in the development of transport technical infrastructure, while the utilisation of regional and local routes will continue to be reduced. As a consequence we must be aware that the implementation of such a formulated transport policy would result primarily in the following:

- exceeding the critical level of emission of nitrogen oxide in terms of ecological development by 9 times. This excess is 5 times more than stated in „The State's Ecological Policy" passed by the Parliament in May 1991, which means a complete disrespect of the Parliament decree by the Government;
- exceeding by nearly 4 times exceeding the critical level of emission of carbon dioxide in terms of sustainable development which will not allow Poland to meet the presently developing international standards in this respect;
- approximately 2.5 times higher energy consumption of transport in relation to the level critical from the sustainable development point of view;
- a significant increase of the area taken over by the transport infrastructure as the car requires 10 times more of such infrastructure compared to public transport.

If the government transport policy would be approved for implementation it could be expected for the policy to have a destructive impact on bio-diversity and a negative impact on public health in the large urban centres in particular. It collides with the assumptions of state policy aiming to extend to the protected areas, recognise the importance of the ecological corridors, preserve the bio-diversity and promote health prevention and ensure the protection of the health of the population.

Considering the above the Institute for Sustainable Development (not for profit environmental organisation) has been conducting activities since 1995 on an "Alternative transport policy in Poland based on the sustainable development criteria". The following four options of transport policy were distinguished in the course of these activities:

1. *government option* with a complete program of motorways construction, closing unprofitable railway lines, complete freedom for the car in the cities, rather unattractive urban public transport, lack of interest in bicycles and pedestrians;
2. *restrained government option* i.e. very similar to government option but with a limited motorway construction program and some bans on cars in city centres and with more attractive urban public transport;
3. *pro-environmental option* with resignation from the motorway construction program, the promotion of railway, very large restrictions on car traffic in city centres and a wide range of public urban transport options and support for pedestrian and bicycle traffic;
4. *sustainable development option* with resignation from the motorway construction program, broad promotion of railway development, restrictions of cars in urban traffic and dominance of public urban transport and with full accessibility for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

The more detailed review of the above four options is presented in the tables below.

A COMPARISON OF THE TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Components	Option G government	Option RG restrained government	Option PE pro-environmental	Option SD sustainable development
Motorways	Complete program	Limited program	No implementation of the program	No implementation of the program
Express roads	Complete program	Complete program	No implementation of the program	No implementation of the program
Regional and local roads	Modernisation	Modernisation	Extension and development of the ring roads	Freeze and modernisation
International and domestic railway lines	Harmonisation with international standards	Harmonisation with international standards	Modernisation of the system, high speed railways	Expansive development, multimedia transport, high speed railways
Regional and local lines	Closing up to 7000 kilometres of unprofitable railway lines	Closing up to 7000 kilometres of unprofitable railway lines	Preservation	Promotion and development, rail buses etc.
Car in cities	Free use, small restrictions	Restrictions in the centre	Very large restrictions	Extreme restrictions
Public urban transport	Rather unattractive	Significant attractiveness	Broad transport offer	Dominating, very well developed
Urban road network	Substantial development	Reasonable development	Limited development	Improvement of the existing one
Parking in cities	Substantial development (including multi-storey parking)	Reasonable development	At the outskirts	Restrictions; only at the outskirts
Bicycle and pedestrian traffic	No interest	Limited interest	Supporting	Full accessibility
Rural areas	Car domination	Car domination	Public transport with bicycles and pedestrians traffic	Public transport with bicycles and pedestrians traffic

Evaluation criteria

The individual options characterise the situation of Polish transport in the year 2010 with the current situation as a basis for this evaluation. The options were evaluated and compared in respect to the following costs: investment, maintenance, external and energy consumption, time of travel, indirect economic and landscape effects, impact on mobility and choice of the means of transport. However, the environment impact was the main factor.

Comparative summary of the basic environment parameters of different options in the perspective of the year 2010.

Type of option	Carriage effort (bln pkm or tkm*)	Emission of NO_x (thous. tons)	Emission of CO_2 (mln tons)	Energy consumption (bln of MJ)
Option G government	395 pkm 205 tkm	230-421	47-56	814-884
Option RG restrained government	365 pkm 200 tkm	210-380	42-50	727-734
Option PE pro-environmental	325 pkm 135 tkm	139-238	29-35	450-530
Option SD sustainable development	220 pkm 110 tkm	83-128	16-19	240-297

* pkm – passenger-kilometres
tkm – product-kilometres

A comparison of the effectiveness of individual options in terms of the unit costs

Type of option	Carriage effort (bln pkm or tkm)	(e) Maintenance costs (in bln PLN)	(z) External costs (in bln PLN)	(c) Costs of travel time (in bln PLN)	(e+z+c) Total costs (in bln PLN)	Investment inputs (in bln PLN)	(e+z+c) Total costs per unit of carriage effort (PLN/pkm+tkm)
Option N "do nothing"	270 pkm 124 tkm	88	55	189	332	10	0,84
Option G government	395 pkm 205 tkm	139	86	213	438	158	0,73
Option RG restrained government	365 pkm 200 tkm	129	78	224	431	106	0.76
Option PE pro-environmental	325 pkm 135 tkm	87	55	186	328	98	0,71
Option SD sustainable development	220 pkm 110 tkm	57	33	131	221	99	0,67

Detailed comparison

The results of the comparison of the environment impact of the above mentioned options enables us to ascertain that only the sustainable development option in the perspective of the year 2025 provides a chance to meet the critical loads for sustainable development levels of pollution emission. It is also worth highlighting that the sustainable development option means the smallest loss of bio-diversity.

In the synthetic quality comparison in terms of the utilisation and economical criteria the PE and SD options have a substantial advantage over G and RG options.

The scale of the quality evaluation:

+ + +	very strong meeting given criterion	–	failure to meet given criterion
+ +	strong meeting given criterion	– –	strong failure to meet given criterion
+	partial meeting given criterion	– – –	very strong failure to meet given criterion
+/–	balancing of meeting and failing to meet given criterion		

Quality comparison of the options in terms of environmental and health criteria

Comparison criteria	Option R government	Option RG restrained government	Option PE pro-environmental	Option SD sustainable development
Critical loads (meeting the requirements of sustainable development)	– –	–	+	+ +
Rarity of the resources	– –	–	+	+ +
Energy consumption	– –	–	+	+ +
Risk for bio-diversity	– –	–	+	+
Accidentality	– –	–	+	+ +
Noise and vibrations	–	–	–	+
Functional congestion	–	–	–	+
Land occupation	– –	–	+	+
Total evaluation	**0 + / 13 –**	**0 + / 8 –**	**6 + / 2 –**	**12 + / 0 –**

Quality comparison of the options in terms of utilisation and economical criteria

Comparison criteria	Option G government	Option RG restrained government	Option PE pro-environmental	Option SD sustainable development
Carriage effort	+ +	+	–	– –
Minimisation of travel time	+	+/–	+/–	+
Minimisation of investment inputs	– – –	– –	– –	– –
Minimisation of maintenance costs	–	–	+	+ +
Minimisation of external costs	– –	–	+	+ +
Economical effectiveness parameter	+/–	–	+ +	+ + +
Potential to attract non-public capital	+	+	–	–
Total evaluation	**4 + / 6 –**	**2 + / 5 –**	**4 + / 4 –**	**8 + / 5 –**

Quality comparison of the options in terms of political, general-economical and social criteria

Comparison criteria	Option R government	Option RG restrained government	Option PE pro-environmental	Option SD sustainable development
Impact on European integration	+ +	+	+	+

Stimulation of economical activity	+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
Motorisation ambitions of the society	+ +	+	–	– –
Political reality	+ +	+	–	– –
Total evaluation	**6 + / 0 –**	**3 + / 0 –**	**1 + / 2 –**	**1 + / 4 –**

Synthetic final comparison

The evaluation of the options of transport policy indicates the advantage of ecological options (PE and SD) due to the environmental criteria as well as utilisation and economical criteria. These options generate the lowest investment, maintenance, external and travel time costs. They allow for the substantial reduction of the use of resources, pollution, creating congestion and decrease the risk for bio-diversity.

Comparison criteria	Option R government	Option RG restrained government	Option PE pro-environmental	Option SD sustainable development
Environmental criteria	0 + / 13 –	0 + / 8 –	6 + / 2 –	12 + / 0 –
Utilisation and economical criteria	4 + / 6 –	2 + / 5 –	4 + / 4 –	8 + / 5 –
Political, general-economical and social criteria	6 + / 0 –	3 + / 0 –	1 + / 2 –	1 + / 4 –
Total evaluation	**10 + / 19 –**	**5 + / 13 –**	**11 + / 8 –**	**21 + / 9 –**

The sustainable development option (SD) came out of this comparison the best. The option assumes 45 to 50% smaller carriage effort compared to the government option. In total the sustainable development option (SD) is the cheapest one in terms of unit of transport activity. The pro-environmental option (PE) is also very attractive thanks to the minimisation of the environmental impact.

However it seems that the sustainable development option is not currently feasible politically, as it assumes resigning from the program of motorway construction in Poland, counteracting the motorisation ambitions of the majority of the society including deleting the usefulness of the car in urban areas and also the high costs associated with the required railway lines construction. Indeed (particularly in light of the current trend in Poland of massive buying and use of cars) the PE and SD options might seem utopian. However it is not possible to meet the requirements of sustainable development in a short time. Sustainable development requires changes in the mentality of the society and politicians (and resulting changes in lifestyle and communication/transport attitude) which could take even as long as a few dozen years.

Acceptance of the government transport policy that is close to the analysed option G (governmental) would mean drifting away from sustainable development.

The Institute for Sustainable Development also prepared a preliminary proposal of the instruments for implementation of sustainable development transport policy

In the area of *landscape management (utilisation of land):*

- restrict expansion of towns/cities, maintain adequate concentration and preservation of open landscape;
- locate offices and trade activities in urban centres or other places which have good access to public transport;

- restrict car traffic in the case of new businesses/buildings through determination of lowest acceptable number of parking spaces;
- increase of housing concentration in centres and internal urban areas;
- transfer the concentration of parking spaces from inner-urban area to outside urban areas (i.e. park & ride);
- reserve the areas close to existing transport network for the purpose of constructing facilities for distribution of goods;
- mix the functions with improvement in equipping the local centres in urban areas and other urbanised areas;
- introduce new tram lines to existing highly populated suburb areas which intensify the closer they are to the station; accompanied by service facilities; incentives for development around existing public transport routes and stations through permitting higher levels of housing concentration;
- construction of a network of bicycle and pedestrian routes with car traffic being subordinated to it; restricting construction of roads to areas developed from scratch;
- establish car-free areas.

In the area of *financial instruments*:
- use of tax on fuel, car sale-purchase transactions, transport vehicles for purpose of promoting purchase and use of cars consuming less fuel;
- use of parking charges (road and street ones) for balancing the supply and demand for road space for cars;
- use of zone fees for entering an area for the purpose of covering costs of new infrastructure;
- introduce a system of electronically collected fees to be payable by people causing congestion in areas of traffic restrictions because of poor air quality or congestion;
- permanent increase of taxes on fuel in order to save energy and limit emission of CO_2;
- take into account external costs of car traffic.

In the area *traffic management:*
- limit road investments to road investments going round sensitive areas with parallel reduction of traffic and other actions improving the ecological situation of bypassed areas;
- separate lanes for users of car-pool systems;
- use of separate lanes and traffic management systems in order to give priority to public transport;
- development of streets and pedestrian walks, dividing the city into different areas of accessibility;
- improving the facilities for bikers and pedestrians;
- extending the „30km/h zones" (or less) in housing estates and other areas requiring this type of action;
- utilisation of visual data transfer for traffic management in order to minimise congestion, improve air quality, improve the conditions of pedestrian traffic;
- introduction of complete information on the actual time of arrival and travel time of means of public transport;

- improve the quality of public transport by separate tram rails and street lanes or whole streets for buses only;
- use of visual data transfer for construction of integrated systems of transport management; maintaining the balance between supply and demand through advanced traffic management systems; informing passengers of the traffic conditions on their transport routes;
- introduction of a large scale reduction of traffic in cities;
- introduction of facilities reducing car speed; increasing the number of roads/streets with speeds restrictions in order to decrease the danger for pedestrians and bikers;
- introduce obligatory plans for servicing the work places through public transport.

In the area of *environment protection*:

- tighten the standards in order to reduce the exhaust emissions and noise level from new vehicles;
- progressive introductions of lower fuel consumption by new vehicles;
- introduction of more frequent and stricter tests controlling the level of exhaust emissions by the vehicles on the roads;
- promoting the use of low-emission buses and ban/limit truck traffic at night in sensitive areas;
- application of fiscal instruments in order to promote environment friendly fuel and less polluting cars, trucks and buses;
- use of visual data transfer and traffic engineering in order to keep traffic flow on the roads in housing estates at the level of ecological acceptance;

The promotion of the Alternative Transport Policy becomes a very urgent issue as the execution of the official transport policy has already begun, the first steps associated with motorway construction have been undertaken and the role of railways in regional and local structures and urban public transport continues to deteriorate. We did not have to wait long for the environmental effect of this policy, because in 1995, for the first time since 1989, the emission of nitrogen oxides increased compared to the previous year, which should be associated with the increase of the number of cars and the scale of their utilisation.

NGO's activities to promote Alternative Transport Policies.

Environmental NGOs in Poland have tried for several years to promote ecological transport solutions. The document Alternative Transport Policy has become a platform for our joint activities. In December 1997 NGOs gathered in Lanckorona, near Krakow, decided to set up a coalition promoting environmentally sustainable transportation. Members of the coalition signed declaration called the Lanckorona Declaration. It states that:

Transport in Poland - as well as in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe - is dominated by and subordinated to cars and trucks, and this process is dynamically continued. Such policies lead to:

- negative impact on peoples' health,
- degradation of the natural environment,

- atrophy of local economic and social ties.

As the coalition we accept „Alternative Transport Policies for Poland Along Principles of Sustainable Development", elaborated by the Institute for Sustainable Development, as the starting point for our activities. In reference to this document we regard as especially necessary:

- to immediately and radically revise the national transport policies,
- to stop, until such a revision, implementation of the motorways construction program,
- to fully implement a principle of incurring all costs, including external costs, by users of the transport infrastructure,
- to act toward the elimination of unnecessary requirements to transport goods and people while maintaining the right to move freely, and also maintaining conditions for honest competition,
- to promote environmentally friendly modes of transportation through introduction of ecological tax reform, tightening technical criteria for vehicles, smoothing out of traffic flow and creating privileges for those unmotorized and for public modes of transport,
- to accept as principle, that transit of goods through Poland will be done by use of Polish railways, as reflected in the „Trucks onto Rails" slogan,
- to take over by the State responsibility for urban transport (e.g. financing mechanism, local coordination),
- to recreate spatial management and regional development from the point of view of avoiding unnecessary transport needs.

Non-governmental organisations declared to continue their activities in an integrated way, aimed at broadening the circle of people and institutions supporting alternative transport concepts and solutions, in order to more effectively influence politicians and national and local administration. As a kind of follow up the Polish Ecological Club organised together with the World Bank office in Poland, a conference on alternative solutions in transport. The conference gathered a wide range of high level officials (Minister of Transport, Vice-Minister of Finance, Vice-Minister of Environment), scientists, banks' and NGO representatives. It was the first situation where environmental NGOs had a chance to present their profound studies on transport and to express their opinions on development of the sector. Unfortunately, even if we managed to agree on particular aspects, for ex. the need to support urban transport, the differences in opinions are still huge. At the moment the Ministry of Transport keeps implementing the narrow-minded vision of transport development, limited to speeding up the Highway Building Program and promoting car dependency.
The only possibility for implementing the Alternative Transport Policy is that Polish officials and decision-makers start to realise changes which can be observed in the West. Countries such as the United Kingdom or Switzerland seem to be aware that, after years of experience, only alternative solutions can solve the transport problems they have.

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