

Rethinking the Last Mile: New Approaches to Urban Logistics

How can freight traffic be better managed in cities?

Wednesday, 2 May, 11:30-13:30

SESSION OUTLINE

Freight traffic can be better managed in cities: good urban logistic systems have an essential role in making cities liveable and sustainable. However, such schemes are often neglected by policy makers.

Innovative freight delivery projects in cities are numerous and the private sector often plays a leading role. But regulatory intervention is usually necessary. In London, for example, the congestion charge stimulated investments in freight consolidation centres. More generally, regulated delivery times, shop opening times and delivery schedules as well as regulation of vehicle noise creates the conditions for successful urban logistics schemes.

The cost of these schemes has to be weighed against the benefits that they engender, that is, reductions in pollution, heavy traffic and noise. The overall financial equilibrium is a key issue and often means long-term public investments at the city level. Sharing the cost of these investments sometimes requires contractual agreement between logistic operators, transport providers, retailers and public authorities since there is only limited opportunity for direct charging.

This session will take stock of the innovative solutions in place in different cities, draw conclusions from collaboration between city authorities, planners, research and innovative logistics operators. It will address the policy framework needed at city level for seamless urban freight logistics and the support needed at national levels.

- Will freight consolidation centres be the future for goods distribution in cities, and therefore be at the heart of green supply chains?
- What is the role for electric delivery vehicles? How much more use could be made of inland waterways or bicycles?
- How are the costs involved to be covered or regulatory incentives to be created?
- How can the "last-mile" be better integrated into a seamless transport supply chain from the origin to the final consumer?

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