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THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF EUROPEAN AGENCIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSPORT

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Abstract: *THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES THE INTERDEPENDENCE AND SYNERGY OF EUROPEAN UNION TRANSPORT POLICIES, FOCUSING ON THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN AGENCIES THAT SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPERVISION OF THESE POLICIES. THE PAPER EXAMINES THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AVIATION SAFETY AGENCY (EASA), THE EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY (EMSA), AND OTHER EUROPEAN BODIES IN ENSURING A HIGH LEVEL OF SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR. FURTHERMORE, IT ANALYZES INITIATIVES FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE INTEGRATION OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES THROUGH JOINT UNDERTAKINGS, SUCH AS SHIFT2RAIL AND EUROPE'S RAIL JOINT UNDERTAKING. THE ARTICLE DEMONSTRATES HOW THESE AGENCIES AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, AND REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT. BY EVALUATING THE EFFICIENCY AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN THESE STRUCTURES, THE IMPORTANCE OF A COORDINATED APPROACH TO ENSURE AN INTEGRATED AND COMPETITIVE EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK IS HIGHLIGHTED.*

Keywords: TRANSPORT SAFETY, EUROPEAN AGENCIES, RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE, SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) has developed a complex policy framework in the field of transport, aimed at promoting a safe, efficient, and sustainable transport network. This policy is based on the principles of integration and harmonization of legislation among member states, with the objective of creating a single transport area that facilitates the free movement of people and goods. In this context, European agencies play an essential role, being responsible for the implementation and supervision of legislative measures as well as providing technical expertise. This

article examines the role of European agencies, such as the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), in ensuring a harmonized and efficient transport framework at the European level.

This work also focuses on initiatives to modernize railway infrastructure through joint undertakings such as Shift2Rail and Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking, which aim to integrate innovative technologies to improve transport safety and efficiency. The importance of this approach lies in the need for transport infrastructure that addresses contemporary challenges, such as climate change, the need for energy efficiency, and increasing economic competitiveness.

The methodology used in this article is mixed, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative study is based on the analysis of relevant European Union documents, such as regulations and directives on transport, as well as reports and studies published by European agencies involved in the implementation of transport policies. This allows for a deep understanding of the regulatory framework and how different agencies contribute to its implementation.

On the other hand, the quantitative study includes the analysis of data related to the funding of transport modernization programs, as well as evaluating the impact of these programs on the safety and efficiency of transport in Europe. The data is sourced from official European Union sources and is used to assess the effectiveness of the measures adopted and to identify potential challenges in their implementation.

This combination of methods provides a comprehensive perspective on the interdependence of European Union transport policies and the role of agencies in ensuring the coherence and efficiency of this framework. The study contributes to a better understanding of how innovations and public policies can support a sustainable and efficient transport system at the European level.

2. MAIN TEXT

Despite the existence of a solid and well-structured regulatory framework, with some flexibility for specific adjustments, an essential role in its implementation and supervision falls to the competent agencies and bodies. It is evident that, within the European context, these agencies are responsible for supporting member states in the implementation of regulations and overseeing compliance with obligations in the transport sector.

Among these is the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), initially established by Regulation 1592/2002 of the Parliament and Council, later replaced by Regulation 216/2008. EASA plays a central role in the European Union's strategy to ensure a high level of safety for air transport, holding significant regulatory and executive prerogatives in this sector. Its role is not limited to drafting regulations but also includes providing the technical expertise necessary for drafting treaties and international agreements related to aviation safety.

Additionally, EASA has specific executive responsibilities, such as certifying products from the aeronautics industry to ensure that they meet quality and environmental protection standards. Although the primary objective of the Agency is to ensure the safety of air transport, it does not have the competence to prevent unlawful acts against civil aviation. These aspects remain under the jurisdiction of the member states, in accordance with the norms of community law.

Through the extension of its competencies, EASA has also gained, under Regulation 216/2008, the authority to issue licenses for flight crews and authorize operators from third countries. Thus, its role is becoming increasingly comprehensive, covering all relevant aspects of civil aviation safety, thereby contributing essentially to the stability and safety of air transport at the European level.

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The Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) was established by the European Commission to manage a series of essential programs, including some in the field of transport. It is responsible for coordinating seven directorates-general, each having a distinct role in supporting the European Union's objectives in the energy, transport, environmental protection, and innovation sectors. Thus, EASME aims to respond to emerging challenges while also capitalizing on opportunities in these areas of activity.

Another important actor in the regulatory architecture of transport at the European level is the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). EMSA plays a significant role in promoting maritime safety by providing operational assistance, monitoring pollution response measures, and offering technical expertise to prevent maritime risks. EMSA's responsibilities are primarily focused on preventive measures, overseeing the implementation of community legislation, and evaluating its effectiveness at the local and regional levels. However, in certain exceptional situations, EMSA is capable of direct intervention, providing ships and equipment to respond to major incidents such as oil spills or accidents detected by satellite surveillance systems.

Due to the experience gained, both theoretically and operationally, EMSA has significant expertise in maritime safety and is capable of offering practical solutions to various challenges in the sector. Additionally, the agency plays a leading role in promoting best practices in maritime transport.

On a technical level, EMSA is tasked with conducting inspections that include verifying the "recognized organizations" by member states, certifying maritime educational systems in third countries, controlling ships docking in European ports, and overseeing national maritime traffic monitoring systems. All these measures are intended to help member states efficiently implement European maritime legislation and standards, with the agency providing real-time data and information to meet the growing needs of the sector.(Biodiversitate, 2013)

Regarding EMSA's responsibilities, they extend to ship reporting, port state control, maritime information integration, Earth observation, pollution response, maritime accident investigation, and, last but not least, the promotion of best practices. The main beneficiaries of EMSA's policies and actions are the institutions of the European Union, the national maritime administrations of the member states, and the coastal states that are members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

The leadership structure of EMSA consists of an executive director, supported by an executive office and a policy advisor, three department directors, an internal control coordinator, and an accountant. The agency has three main departments: Safety, Standards and Operations, and Institutional Services, each divided into several units. The Administrative Board of EMSA is responsible for adopting the budget, organizational chart, work program, and annual report, while the Agency's strategy is reviewed every five years.

To fulfill its mission, EMSA actively collaborates with other agencies and institutional organizations within the European area, including the European Space Agency, the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre for Narcotics (MAOC-N), the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), EU NAVFOR, the International Maritime Organization, FRONTEX, and the neighboring countries of the European Union, within the context of the neighborhood policy.(Verloren Van Themaat, 2008, p.155)

The Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) was created to manage research and infrastructure projects in the fields of transport, energy, and telecommunications, becoming operational in 2014, replacing the Trans-European Transport Network Executive Agency.

Among the most significant initiatives undertaken by INEA is the "Connecting Europe" project, with an impressive budget of 30 billion euros allocated to the transport, energy, and digital

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telecommunications sectors, as well as the development of the "Horizon" research program, supported by 7 billion euros to promote smart, green, and integrated transport and secure, efficient energy sources.

The European Union Agency for Railways (ERA), based in Valenciennes and Lille, plays an essential role in ensuring an increased level of safety for railway transport by integrating European railway systems and eliminating the need for trains to stop at member state borders. In this regard, ERA collaborates with national authorities, European institutions, and other relevant stakeholders to develop common technical standards, as well as to coordinate the implementation of uniform signaling rules throughout the European area.

Among European initiatives, Clean Sky 2 stands out as a public-private partnership between the European Commission and the European aeronautics industry, aimed at reducing environmental impact and improving energy efficiency in aviation. Clean Sky 2 promotes the implementation of innovative technologies and, through the use of three key tools—monitored technologies, advanced aircraft concepts, and demonstrative programs—it seeks to reduce fuel consumption and CO2 emissions by 20-30%, as well as to decrease noise pollution to a similar extent. This initiative aims to increase European competitiveness and improve mobility by supporting research and studies in the aeronautics industry.(Baldwin Richard, 2006, p. 460)

Clean Sky 2 has a complex organizational structure, led by an executive director who reports to a Governing Board composed of representatives from the leading companies in the aeronautics industry, the European Commission, and approximately 70 associates. The main beneficiaries of this partnership are the citizens, who will benefit from reduced emissions and noise; the economy, which will gain from improved aeronautics industry performance; SMEs, which will have the opportunity to become equipment suppliers; and the scientific and academic community, which will contribute to the implementation of innovative technologies.

The SESAR Joint Undertaking is another example of a successful initiative, established under the Treaty of the European Union, with the aim of developing a modern air traffic management system at the European level. SESAR aims to prevent overcrowding in the EU airspace and reduce environmental impact by coordinating research and development efforts in this field and ensuring the implementation of a sustainable plan for air traffic management over the next 30 years.

These agencies and public-private partnerships represent essential pillars in achieving the strategic objectives of the European Union in the fields of transport, energy, and telecommunications. They illustrate the interdependence between technological innovation and regulatory policy, thereby contributing to the creation of an integrated and sustainable system for European mobility. Their role, in addition to implementing standards and monitoring compliance, is to promote best practices and bring innovative solutions, thereby supporting the development of a competitive and green economy at the European level.

The Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking (S2R) was established by Council Regulation No. 642/2014, aiming to create a public-private partnership dedicated to managing research and innovation activities to develop railway services at the European level. The founding members of Shift2Rail include the European Commission and railway companies from major European economies, thereby emphasizing the European Union's strong commitment to modernizing and enhancing rail transport.

The primary objective of Shift2Rail is to support the implementation of the measures set out in the 2011 White Paper on Transport, with the aim of improving the efficiency and attractiveness of rail transport. These measures aim to transform rail transport into a competitive and appealing option for both passengers and freight transport. To achieve this objective, Shift2Rail has focused on several strategic directions:

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- Utilizing cost-effective and reliable trains, including high-capacity and high-speed trains;
- Implementing advanced rail traffic management and control systems to enhance operational efficiency;
- Developing a modern and reliable railway infrastructure capable of supporting the use of next-generation trains;
- Promoting innovative software applications to make rail transport more attractive to users;
- Developing advanced technologies to make freight rail transport in Europe more competitive and appealing.

The European Union's funding for Shift2Rail amounted to approximately 450 million euros, provided through the Horizon 2020 framework program, while contributions from participating railway companies reached around 470 million euros. For the period 2021-2027, the Shift2Rail program has been succeeded by the new "Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking" initiative, as part of the Horizon Europe program, with a total estimated budget of 1.2 billion euros from EU funds, complemented by additional contributions from private partners, bringing the total budget to approximately 2.4 billion euros.

Through its initiatives, Europe's Rail aims to continue the modernization of railway infrastructure alongside the integration of innovative technologies to fundamentally transform European rail transport. This new approach aims to create a fully integrated, efficient, and sustainable railway network, thereby contributing to the achievement of the European Union's strategic objectives for green mobility and a transition towards climate neutrality.

3. CONCLUSION

This article has highlighted the importance of synergy and the interdependence of European Union transport policies, emphasizing the crucial role of European agencies in the effective implementation of the regulatory framework. By analyzing the activities of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), and other relevant agencies, it has been demonstrated that a coordinated and collaborative approach is essential to ensure a high level of safety, efficiency, and sustainability in the transport sector.

The cooperation between European agencies and public-private partnerships, such as Shift2Rail and Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking, significantly contributes to the modernization of infrastructure and the integration of innovative technologies, thereby promoting sustainable mobility and reducing environmental impact. These initiatives not only support transport efficiency but also foster a more competitive and green economy at the European level.

Additionally, the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the adopted measures has shown that the role of European agencies goes beyond the mere implementation of regulations, being an essential element in the development and implementation of innovative solutions to current challenges, such as climate change and increasing mobility demands. The synergy between agencies, joint undertakings, and member states represents a successful model for developing an integrated and competitive transport network capable of responding to global challenges.

In conclusion, European Union transport policies, supported by dedicated agencies and partnerships, demonstrate a holistic and effective approach that contributes to achieving the EU's strategic objectives: safety, sustainability, and competitiveness. It is essential for this collaboration to be continued and intensified to ensure the transition towards truly sustainable mobility in the context of increasingly complex economic and environmental challenges.

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