

(AE) TRANSPORT: ASECAP wants to promote concession model

*Brussels, 31/03/2015 (Agence Europe) - On Monday 30 March, the European Association of Operators of Toll Road Infrastructures (ASECAP) organised a conference on motorway concession models. Discussion centred on a study that ASECAP had commissioned PriceWaterhouseCoopers to carry out in 2014. This highlights the advantages of the concession system: budgetary increase for the state that allocates the concession, no financial burden on the state for building the road network, implementation of the user pays principle and a guarantee that some of the money collected by the tolls will be used to improve infrastructure. Participants also asserted that a private concession company was usually a better manager than the state. They suggested that the only drawbacks to this model were the risk undertaken by the concession holder and the attitude of the public who do not like tolls. Jean Mesqui, the former president of ASECAP said: "People think that roads should be free, that concession companies are rich, and why should we pay them?". Kallistratos Dionelis, ASECAP Secretary General said that a way had to be found to explain this model. The study and conference also aimed to make this model better known in Europe. According to ASECAP, the concession model is the dominant one in a number of countries, particularly France, Spain, Portugal and Italy but is less prevalent in northern European countries. Mesqui told *EUROPE* that the model was not particularly well-known at the European institutions. "This is clear to see when we meet MEPs or European Commissioners". ASECAP Vice-President Massimo Schintu said: "We need to have the courage to present this study at European level". He also said that he had not ruled out organising other conferences in the next few years. (Jean Comte)*

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