



THE NETWORK
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EUROPEAN
CITIES

EUROCITIES Position on the Future of Transport

The Urban Dimension of the EU Transport Strategy

EUROCITIES

EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities. Founded in 1986, the network brings together the local governments of over 130 large cities in some 34 European countries. EUROCITIES represents the interests of its members and engages in dialogue with the European institutions across a wide range of policy areas affecting cities. These include: economic development, the environment, transport and mobility, social affairs, culture, the information and knowledge society, and services of general interest.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Eight years after the adoption of the White Paper on Transport, EUROCIITIES remains committed to the definition and implementation of a European policy on transport that recognises the role of European cities and the need to put urban mobility at the top of the EU transport agenda.

EU transport policy is an essential tool to help the EU reach its overall objectives and to respond to the current challenges of combating climate change and generating economic growth and stimulus. Given the important role of sustainable urban transport in meeting Europe's climate change objectives, and as a key driver of economic growth and development, the forthcoming European Commission Communication on the Future of Transport should highlight the urban dimension of EU Transport policy.

This paper represents the EUROCIITIES contribution to the consultation process that is gathering input for this Communication on the Future of Transport, and we would like to underline the following in this respect:

- Ø The role of cities in driving the EU economy, protecting our environmental quality and combating social exclusion means that a focus on urban mobility within the EU strategy for the Future of Transport is strategically justified.
- Ø City governments should be recognised as bodies managing key components of the European transport chain and as catalysts for sustainable mobility and growth across the EU.
- Ø A modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport should remain top of the EU transport agenda.
- Ø Dedicated EU funding should be allocated to urban transport projects in the future, in particular due to the fact that cities represent the first and last link of the transport chain for goods and passengers.
- Ø An integrated approach at EU level is needed to ensure that mobility and transport issues are linked with challenges like climate change, energy efficiency, demographic change, economic growth, social inclusion and health
- Ø The EU should further develop political and legislative initiatives in the field of research technologies and standardisation, green propulsion (cleaner cars, alternative fuels) and promote clean and joint procurements. This would help curb transport emissions and encourage strategic technological developments

1. WHY THE EU TRANSPORT STRATEGY NEEDS A STRONG URBAN DIMENSION

Transport is cross-sectoral and interacts with various policy fields. It is paramount to recognise the crucial role and impact transport has, and could have, on current strategic challenges, such as the need to stimulate economic growth and combat climate change.

As an application of the principle of the freedom of movement, the mobility of people and goods, is central to the completion of the European internal market. The EU needs an efficient transport system to keep Europe moving and enable the European economy to grow. As the start and finishing point of a significant proportion of journeys, cities are the key link in the freight and passenger transport chain.

How we shape the future of transport will be decisive for how sustainably Europe develops in the future. With more than 80% of the EU population living in cities, it is obvious that sustainable urban mobility must be a vital strategic objective for the EU. City governments have a key role to play in achieving policy objectives at local, national and EU level not only on transport, but also on economic growth, environment (particularly air quality), climate change, health and quality of life.

The planning of intermodal exchange points between air, sea, river, road and rail traffic is crucial to the future efficiency of transport in the EU, and the functioning of these intermodal exchange points relies heavily on the cities they are located in and around. Similarly, improved links from urban transport systems into the Trans-European Transport Networks are essential to ensure that these networks reach their full potential and do not have negative side-effects on urban areas.

The conference on the Future of Transport organized by the European Commission in March 2009 rightly identified the urban context as one of the main challenges to transport policies in terms of both sustainability (CO₂, air pollution) and competitiveness (congestion). This will have an impact on the design of the transport system as a whole, and the urban context will increasingly serve as a "laboratory" for the transport sector in the years to come; a testing ground for the development of new technological and financial solutions.

While close cooperation at all levels is needed to ensure a coherent integrated strategy, it is important that the principle of subsidiarity prevails and that action at EU level does not restrict the flexibility of cities to design and implement the most appropriate transport solutions for their local situation.

2. SHAPING THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORT: CITIES' VISION FOR A NEW MOBILITY CULTURE

Demographic change, urbanisation, regional integration, globalisation, climate change, social exclusion, air pollution, health and technology are some of the many drivers that the transport sector will need to respond to and adapt to if it is to be ready for the next 30 to 50 years. In this context, EUROCIITIES would like to highlight key elements for an EU strategy for the Future of Transport. Several of these points have been developed in detail in EUROCIITIES' contributions to the Green Paper on Urban Mobility and we believe it is important that work on the Green Paper and Action Plan on Urban Mobility is fully integrated into the EU's overall approach to transport policy.¹

2.1 Cities as intermodal hubs

Cities are the start and finish line for freight and passengers in Europe. In order to ensure effective and efficient interconnections between cities and regions, we believe that the following require particular attention:

- Relief of bottlenecks at interchange points (due to both physical and timetabling reasons)
- Support for development of intermodal solutions for air / rail links
- Increasing the number of interconnections around major cities

2.2 Integrated approach of modes

EUROCIITIES members have ambitious objectives for improving the quality of life for their citizens, tackling climate change, making more efficient use of energy, improving economic performance and combating social inclusion. In cities, one key means of achieving this is to encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling. This requires a fully integrated approach at city level and the support of appropriate and adequate funding from various sources, whether local, regional, national or European. New approaches for co-ordination are needed at EU level, which should focus on data collection and dissemination concerning the mobility situation in cities, sharing and promoting best practice, particularly on sustainable urban transport planning. However, the choice of which tools are most appropriate to achieve modal shift at the local level should remain the decision of the city administration.

2.3 Infrastructure planning, freight and modal shift

From the point of view of the internal market and of social cohesion, it is important to provide efficient infrastructure within and between cities and their functional urban areas. It is also important to link agglomerations to rural areas in order to avoid rural depopulation and regional

¹ EUROCIITIES recent publications on Urban Mobility can be found at <http://www.eurocities.eu>

disparities. Integrated planning is key to achieving efficient urban transport and adequately responding to current challenges.

At the same time, congestion is a significant problem in and around cities and it is necessary to involve city governments in developing solutions to cope with it. The EU should promote the optimal management and use of existing infrastructure to ensure the greatest efficiency in terms of infrastructure capacity.

Freight is a particular problem for cities, especially in terms of the last mile delivery of goods. As the backbone of the “real” economy of cities and Europe in general, both passenger and freight transport planning must be considered in a strategic way. An efficient freight transport sector makes an important contribution to the competitiveness of industry in regions.

The EU should play a coordinating role to ensure that time and space management of freight is optimised in all Member States.

2.4 Greener towns and cities

We believe that the link between the transport sector and the environment (air pollution, emissions and noise) must be emphasised at all levels, as sustainable transport can reduce the adverse effects of climate change for Europe as a whole, in particular in terms of reducing energy use and emissions of pollutants. A coherent European approach, including the climate and energy package, as well as the proposed Covenant of Mayors on Energy Efficiency, is needed to meet EU environmental targets. This should include:

Modal shift: Cleaner urban transport and new technologies will not be sufficient to reduce emissions caused by transport. EU and national efforts are needed to influence passenger behaviour and promote a modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport. An EU transport strategy should take into consideration our increasingly mobile population and act to:

- Raise community awareness of the need to travel more sustainably
- Promote cycling and walking with a focus on health
- Make collective transport more attractive and a genuine alternative to private transport

Modal shift for freight is also key to achieving sustainability goals. It will be necessary to transfer more of Europe’s freight transport from road to rail or water. Combining it with city freight terminals can contribute to reducing energy consumption and pollution, both at national and city level.

Alternative fuels: The European Commission should strengthen research activities on alternative propulsion systems and fuels to ensure that a range of viable and sustainable technologies are available as quickly as possible. This should include work on electric vehicles (including the necessary infrastructure and common standards), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and hydrogen-based technologies. A continued tightening of EU legislation on vehicle emissions (GHG and other pollutants) is also necessary.

Pricing schemes: EU policy should include guidance to help cities design demand management measures, including restrictions such as congestion or green zones, which achieve their objectives without creating disproportionate restrictions on free movement.

2.5 Road safety

Setting standards for safer vehicles and developing Europe-wide education campaigns on road safety are some of the many tools to meet the targets of a 50% reduction of fatal road accidents by 2020.

The EU should not forget to address problems like blind spots for lorry drivers and cross-border enforcement of traffic offences. EUROCIITIES is providing detailed input on road safety issues to the European Commission in the form of a separate response to the consultation on the 4th Road Safety Action Programme. We would nevertheless like to underline that urban road safety should also be an integral part of an EU strategy on the Future of Transport.

2.6 Investments in R&D

EUROCIITIES recognises the importance of targeted research activities of the European Commission in the field of urban mobility. We believe it is especially important that the European Commission ensures that:

- cities are more closely involved in research activities
- dissemination and uptake of results is optimised
- further research activities are focused on alternative fuels/propulsion systems, planning, freight and logistics, mobility management and road safety.

It is also important to encourage the development of a (market) demand larger than that of public authorities. Electric vehicles and new tools such as ITS will be created and tested in the urban context and in cooperation with different stakeholders. There is therefore a need for European coordination of regional and local solutions, which would also e.g. imply co-funding and stricter Eurostandards.

3. THE CHALLENGE OF FINANCING

The integrated package of measures that cities will need to implement in order to achieve sustainable mobility solutions in the future will require financial support from various sources, whether local, regional, national or European. This support will need to be integrated into a broader policy context, for the functional urban area, through which cities will set their targets and design their tools.

Facing challenges such as climate change and congestion, European cities will need dedicated funding for urban transport in the future. The scope and design of such funding instruments should be an important part of the discussions related to the next EU budget, and should take into account the different needs of cities across the EU (e.g. that in new member state cities the most pressing need is the maintenance and improvement of existing lines and rolling stock.)

EUROCITIES members want to have the full range of instruments at their disposal to raise additional funding for investments in better public transport. Experiences with traffic growth in certain European cities show that it is very difficult to reduce traffic without specific pricing policies. Cities should have the possibility to consider the full range of demand management tools (e.g. road pricing, road user charging, parking, etc.). This is currently not the case in some Member States.

Public transport has a financial model involving public funding, but in order to be financially sustainable, European cities will also have to look for other innovative solutions. In this sense, we welcome the progress made in cooperation with the European Investment Bank and the development of new instruments, such as JESSICA. Cities would welcome further guidance from the EU on access to new models of funding or urban transport and public-private partnerships (PPPs).

In summary, EUROCITIES recommendations to the European Commission on shaping the future EU strategy on the Future of Transport are:

- Ø Provide support to cities to tackle the issue of bottlenecks at intermodal hubs.
- Ø Encourage cooperation between all levels to work on infrastructure planning and improve interurban, regional and international connections.
- Ø Emphasise and facilitate better time and space management of freight logistics.
- Ø Develop EU guidance on demand management measures, including restrictions such as congestion or green zones.
- Ø Promote modal shift towards more sustainable transport modes
- Ø Develop new technologies, especially ITS and cleaner cars: stricter Eurostandards and further investments in electric and hydrogen vehicles are needed. The necessary infrastructure has to be developed via partnerships
- Ø Incorporate road safety as a key component of future transport frameworks.

- Ø Develop dedicated funding instruments for urban transport in the future.
- Ø Further promote PPPs and the development of innovative financing models
- Ø Provide guidance for cities to facilitate access to new models of funding for urban transport.

CONCLUSIONS

Transport links are the cornerstone of economic development, social cohesion and environmental quality. Poor transport links can harm the competitiveness of cities and regions, of national economies and of the European Union as a whole. The development of these links is vital to the realisation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies.

With a volatile economic situation, it is even more crucial that transport investments avoid lost potential and negative impacts, such as increased congestion that threatens economic competitiveness.

The vision for the Future of Transport should acknowledge the crucial component that urban transport represents for the transport chain, and help identify the tools that will enable cities to remove bottlenecks and allow transport flows to run smoothly. EU funding and innovative financing solutions should help all levels respond to current challenges.

A modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport belongs to the future of transport. Cycling and walking are not only non-polluting modes, they are also healthier modes for citizens.

Furthermore, in order to achieve coherent transport policies in the future and better integrate the internal market, cities and relevant transport authorities must be involved in the planning and delivery of transport strategies, in partnership with regional and national authorities. This is also true in terms of the relationship between transport and other policy areas, such as urban and land-use planning. Measures taken at national or local level need to be consistent to avoid unnecessary increases in the need for mobility, which can be caused by poor planning of the distance between shops/home and the intermodal hubs in the cities. It is important here to consider the wider functional urban area, and not only the core city itself.

There is also a clear need for a strategic approach. Intermodal interchange points must be planned in the context of an overall vision of the organisation of the urban landscape and transport.

Furthermore, the Trans-European Transport Networks policy should avoid lost potential and negative impacts, such as increased congestion that threatens economic competitiveness. City governments have a key role to play and recommend that the definition and implementation of TEN-T projects should systematically include a consultation of the local level, to ensure efficient and effective interfaces with the urban transport systems.

Efficient transport will help restart the engines of growth and respond to current challenges. To do so, we must put citizens at the heart of the transport system, with the European Commission acting as an enabler and facilitator.