



September 2009

**Consultation response from EMTA to EUROPEAN TRANSPORT POLICY (ETP):**

« Towards an integrated, technology led and user friendly system »

*(Brussels COM (2009) 279/4)*

EMTA is the association that brings together the authorities responsible for public transport in the largest European cities. EMTA promotes the exchange of information and good practice in the field of public transport organisation, planning and funding.

EMTA has currently 32 members across 17 European countries, their public transport networks serve more than 90 million European citizens, and a partner institution in Canada (Montreal).

In the past years EMTA has consistently answered consultations from the European Commission notably the Green Paper "Towards a new culture for Urban Mobility"<sup>1</sup> and at time took the initiative to address European Institutions<sup>2</sup>, convinced of the importance of participating into the building of the European Transport Policy.

EMTA takes again the opportunity to express its comments to the European Commission on a Sustainable future for transport: "towards an integrated, technology led and user friendly system".

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1. The modal split for passenger transport has been and still remain largely dominated by the private car in European countries. It accounted for 73% of all trips in 2008 while the bus travel had the second place in all but five European countries with a share of 8%, and rail trams and metro have a 7% share<sup>3</sup>. Car ownership levels in EU-27 has increased by 22% from 1996 to 2006, allowing passenger car use to increase by 18%<sup>4</sup>.

A sustainable future for Urban Mobility at metropolitan scale calls for a long term vision and a pro-active strategy involving actors at various levels, local, regional, national and even European.

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<sup>1</sup> [Consultation response from EMTA 2007](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Message to the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission Dec 2008](#) and [EMTA addresses members of Parliament March 2009](#)

<sup>3</sup> Source : EEA Transport at a cross road Term 3/2009

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

The document "Towards an integrated, technology led and user friendly system" points towards a better integration of the different modes of transport as a way to improve the overall efficiency, and as an absolute priority in the European Transport Policy (ETP).

In fact the TEN-T network strategy and the urban transport [future] strategy are two aspects of the same subject, that is to say territorial mobility and accessing to further places on the national ground or abroad. Urban mobility can be considered as the last part of the chain. Both strategies should be linked for a better efficiency of the whole.

2. As regards the metropolitan mobility, the lasting experience of EMTA shows that the best way to reach integration in the transport modes is the setting up of integrated transport authorities bringing together different levels of authority from local to sometimes regional, on the metropolitan scale composed of the main city and its catchment area including several medium-sized to small cities. These transport authorities in turn have played a crucial role in the implementation of sustainable urban transport plans. Thanks to their recent enlarged competencies extending beyond the traditional public transport network supervision and coordination, to reach other aspects of mobility ranging from tariff integration, parking policy, traffic management, green zones, walking and cycling schemes, car rental or car sharing schemes, and even freight management, transport authorities have been able to handle comprehensive and complex strategies at local level to better meet mobility needs while having concerns with environmental impacts.

However as the recent workshop held in Valencia on April 2009<sup>5</sup> has showed the way isn't an easy one and to ensure the success of such Mobility plans, some conditions are needed, among the most important are:

- Mobility plans must find a good articulation at same level with other sectoral planning related to land-use, to economic development and to social cohesion, and at higher level with the national strategy to combat climate change and the related national targets. Time scale of those different planning documents aren't harmonized which adds to the complexity.
- Key actors of the Mobility Plans are the municipalities. Firstly because this is where the real challenge of modal shift lies. CRTM Madrid reckons that up to 80% of the trips made by car in the municipalities surrounding Madrid, represent a maximum length of 5 to 7 kms. Typically such trips could have been done with public transport or cycling. Secondly municipalities are the place where measures are implemented. While in the main city skills and expertise are wide-spread, in medium to small sized municipalities those new tasks call for extensive training and transfer of expertise.
- Carrying necessary before-hand studies and implementing measures pose a real challenge in times of restricted budgets particularly in the municipalities.

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<sup>5</sup> [EMTA Workshop on mobility plans proceedings –Valencia Apr 2009](#)

3. Besides an intelligent planning strategy, increasing recourse to technology-led instruments is the second pillar of the proposed future ETP.

Advance technologies in particular in ITS to facilitate real time intermodal information covering all aspects of mobility and the development of ticketing and travel information software applications delivered "over the air" to contactless mobile phone handsets, enabling seamless travel on public transport is under way in many transport systems across Europe, as a result of various local initiatives. Applications are promising and many other services mobility-related could be integrated into the technology.

However establishing the framework that enables the emergence of standards where appropriate with a view to facilitate interoperability and in due respect of subsidiarity is the role of EC. It is its role also to encourage and support the exchange of experience.

Similarly, the demonstration projects of advanced technologies in transport systems or vehicle technologies, which are of particular importance for enlightening decision-makers will have to be supported by adequate funding possibly joint funding from European level, industrial sector and national level. At local level, possibilities will be scarce.

4. The third pillar of the ETP is the importance given to the human factor: the passengers as end users and the workers in the transport sector.

Transport is about people and transport authorities are careful to improve the travel experience of the citizens, passengers satisfaction surveys are among the usual exercises of the Mobility Plans assessments. However the proposals adopted in December 2008 to apply passengers' rights to buses and coaches<sup>6</sup> in the same way they are provisioned for rail services seem difficult to practically adjust to the operation of urban bus services and might even be discouraging for operators.

On the other hand mobility services offered throughout the metropolitan territory will be successful as long as they meet the needs of the passengers. But travel patterns are changing peak-hours period are extending, late evening riding is popular, and also specific activities have emerged as places generating flows of traffic, usually not in the city-center but rather in the periphery, such as plants, hospitals, universities leading to specific plans for trips to work (compulsory in Spain for example). The management of the demand for transport call for additional research in travel behavior and how to influence it. So far such studies are still in infancy.

5. The fourth pillar of the ETP is tackling climate change and improving the environment.

The EU has set challenging targets for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction. If these are to be met, transport-related emissions must be dramatically reduced. The widespread take-up of low-carbon vehicles with appropriate support infrastructure such as electric charging points and hydrogen refuelling facilities must become a reality. Standards for vehicles and infrastructure should be adopted at a European level as soon as possible. In addition to reducing CO<sub>2</sub>, urgent action is needed to improve the air quality in many of Europe's urban areas. EURO emissions standards need to be as tough as practical and

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<sup>6</sup> [COM \(2008\) 817](#)

emission testing needs to reflect real-world conditions. The Directive on the Promotion of Clean and Energy Efficient Road Transport Vehicles (COM (2007)817 on 6 November 2008) which aims at the creation of a market for vehicles with alternative drive technologies and fuels, is an important step however facilitating joint procurement across European countries should be seen as the next step to take, one that is of the EU competency.

Innovative policies on the introduction of green / low emission zones are an important policy tool in tackling poor air quality. Although the increasing number of these schemes can present a problem for vehicles moving between zones, rather than regulation at a European level, the Commission should develop best practice principles for their design. In addition ITS solutions capable of delivering compliance information and payment options should be supported by EU funding.

What are the financial prospects?

In order to cope with the higher gear in urban mobility, significant changes have to be achieved.

Public transport has environmental advantages in comparison to individual transport. Improving public transport services will make it more attractive for the passengers. For this, quality is the key word.

In metropolitan areas, the situation is contrasted. Although the modal share is largely in favour of private cars (see point 1 above) particularly in outer suburbs, the demand for public transport is strong. In average it reaches 232 journeys per inhabitant per year, meaning at least one journey by public transport every labour day<sup>7</sup>. Several transport networks in major metropolitan areas, as was disclosed in EMTA Conference on November 2008, are indeed running at capacity or close to capacity (this is the case for London TfL or for STIF Ile de France).

Therefore the expected changes will have to encompass modernizing the existing transport networks and extending where necessary in particular for orbital liaisons to better accommodate the peripheral cities, about delivering new services mobility-related, about using advanced technology and about renewing rolling stock to improve capacity performances. The plan will require a "considerable and well coordinated funding" as EC puts it, adding "but the necessary resources will be difficult to find".

EMTA can't help but express once more its worry about the situation. The current economic crisis has indeed impacted the public transport sector<sup>8</sup> which suffers from a decrease in the number of passengers leading to a reduction of fare revenues and simultaneously a threat of reduction in public spending allocated to public transport. In this context, even if the challenge is deemed to be "much reduced by cooperation at EU level, provided local level takes better advantage of FP7 and Cohesion Policy programmes", it is hard to see from the local transport authorities point of view, how significant improvements are going to take place.

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<sup>7</sup> Source [EMTA Barometer 2006](#)

<sup>8</sup> A survey through EMTA members assessing the impact of the economic crisis will be released in the coming weeks

Besides, competition with the car sector, which has, thanks to market pressure, made strong efforts to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> performance and is developing clean-carbon technologies or electric powered cars, will be exacerbated if in the mean time public transport loses its advantage in terms of environmental impact<sup>9</sup>.

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While subsidiarity is legitimately acknowledged by the European Commission, which recognizes the right and relevance of local policy makers to make the right choice that best suit the local needs, there seem to be a temptation to pass onto the local level, all the responsibility of overcoming barriers that might get in the way of achieving the ideal ETP summarized in « Towards an integrated, technology led and user friendly system » whereas a large part of the task should be accomplished by Member States the only one to have the capacity and competency.

The document « Towards an integrated, technology led and user friendly system » unfolds a desirable vision of the future of public transport however, it unfortunately doesn't show clearly how objectives will be reached. Therefore EMTA hopes the document will be followed by a realistic action plan giving clear orientations and clarifying role and responsibilities at all levels from local to national and to European.

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<sup>9</sup> in Berlin electric cars are already running through the city, a study by Deutsche Bahn, says that about 20 per cent of rail passengers would end traveling by train, if an average car had better environmental standards.

## Transport Authorities Member of EMTA as of 1st January 2009

Amsterdam	Stadsregio
Barcelona	ATM
Bahia de Cadiz	CMTBC
Berlin	VBB
Bilbao	CTB
Birmingham	CENTRO
Brussels	Région Bruxelles Capitale
Budapest	BKSZ
Copenhagen	MOVIA
Dublin	DTO
Frankfurt	RMV
Hamburg	HVV
Helsinki	YTV
London	TfL
Lyon	SYTRAL
Madrid	CRTM
Manchester	GMPTE
Milan	ATM
Montréal*	AMT
Oslo	RUTER
Paris - Ile de France	STIF
Prague	ROPID
Sevilla	CTAS
Sheffield	SYPTÉ
Stockholm	SL
Stuttgart	VRS
Torino	AMMT
Valencia	eTM
Vienna	VOR
Vilnius	MESP
Warsaw	ZTM
Lisbon Observer	

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