

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE COMMUNICATION ON A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR TRANSPORT

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(6) **Coordinated action.** Effective action requires coordination between different levels of government: what can the EU do to facilitate this process and avoid inconsistent approaches? Many of the challenges for transport will be in the urban environment: are there specific measures the EU could take to help local authorities?

Different socio-economic groups of urban populations are differently exposed to the negative impacts of (road) transport. As these groups are often characterised by e.g. low income, high shares of unemployment and a low education status, they are also at risk from social deprivation. This can lead to disproportional negative health effects due to multiple deprivation coupled with a reduced ability to take preventive or curative health care measures (due to e.g. financial reasons or a lack of knowledge). In turn, such effects cause increasing public health costs, particularly in the context of an ageing population, as age is also an important factor influencing people's exposures to traffic emissions in their homes. Especially young children and the elderly are also more vulnerable to potential health damages from such exposures.

Such effects are commonly described as **environmental justice** issues, which have been receiving attention in the USA since the 1980's but are only slowly being looked at in an integrated fashion in Europe, particularly with respect to transport.

Alongside health policies, urban and transport planners urgently need to take such effects into consideration when evaluating existing situations and future development options and scenarios. The European case base is so slim, though, that there is not sufficient evidence to derive reliable curative or preventive strategies, which would also need to be integrated with measures and strategies aiming towards e.g. reducing congestion or solving other common urban transport problems (e.g. What potential synergies can be created? What are potential conflicts in relevant policy objectives and how can they be resolved?)

The EU can help local authorities in several ways:

1. raising awareness of transport and environmental justice issues (and associated social justice and public health implications) through publications, events and relevant networks of local authority practitioners
2. making existing research results available through EU platforms
3. commissioning / supporting targeted research activities in EU member states

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this contribution are my own and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the institution I work for.

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