

EU Actions for Urban Mobility

Response to the public consultation of the European Commission on a new Action Plan on Urban Mobility

March 2008



**European Federation for
TRANSPORT and ENVIRONMENT**

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The role of the EU in urban mobility

The main problems and issues in relation to urban transport include quality of life and health as affected by pollution, noise and congestion. Urban transport makes a major contribution to climate change and consumption of energy, including fossil fuels.

Improved urban planning, new technologies and infrastructure measures have a central role to play in more efficient and sustainable transport systems. The EU should be mindful of subsidiarity, and add value to the activities of cities and regions.

Measures to encourage the provision of good quality, environmentally-friendly (fuel-efficient, low-emissions, quiet) collective transport, and to encourage walking and cycling as viable alternatives to private vehicles, should be central aims of EU action on urban passenger transport.

Increasing transport efficiency and thus reducing traffic volumes and reducing emissions from the urban delivery fleet should be the main aims of urban freight measures.

T&E believes that the integration of urban transport in EU sectoral policies has not yet been effective. The urban dimension must be more clearly reflected in environment policy, energy policy, state aid, financing and loans, health policy, regional development policy and taxation policy.

Demand management measures in urban transport are unavoidable to ensure efficient use of the limited space, reduce health risks, improve quality of life and the urban environment. The Commission should facilitate the use of demand management measures for all modes of transport in urban areas, to encourage system efficiency and sustainability. This may include guidance on interoperability and transparency requirements. However, urban charging falls strictly under subsidiarity and cities and regions must be free to determine the best solutions for local conditions, and design the most appropriate systems to meet local policy objectives.

T&E believes that the EU should commit to prioritising financial resources for the most environmentally sustainable transport modes and thus encourage Member States to allocate funds (including Cohesion Policy Funds) based on appropriate ex-ante assessment of total social and environmental impacts. This should include a requirement that an appropriate proportion of total EU transport funding is allocated to sustainable urban transport projects.

EU transport funding should be available for schemes aimed at introducing demand management schemes to cities: research, expertise exchange, system design and set-up costs could be supported from a European level. The EU should also support procurement of low-emission, fuel-efficient and quiet vehicles in public fleets.

Training and guidance is needed for decision makers on the inclusion of environmental sustainability aspects in funding applications, transport planning and urban planning. The EU guidance on Sustainable Urban Transport Planning is an excellent starting point which should be further developed. The EU should continue

to support exchange of best practice, including mentoring, twinning and other capacity-building programmes between cities and regions.

The EU can already take very effective measures for the urban environment under other policy areas:

- Vehicle standards for fuel efficiency, air pollutants and noise must be ambitious and stimulate technological development. Effective CO2 emissions standards, EURO standards and noise emissions standards are urgently needed for cars, vans, lorries and public transport vehicles.
- Stringent application of effective air quality standards, including incentives for retrofitting of emissions reducing components (diesel filters);
- Measures to reduce the well-to-wheel greenhouse emissions of all fuels;

Consultation questions

Modal shift

Q2-3.) What measures could be taken to promote walking and cycling as real alternatives to car? What could be done to promote a modal shift towards sustainable transport modes in cities?

Demand management measures to discourage private car use and reduce traffic volume cannot be avoided in the design of sustainable urban transport systems. Clearly, alternatives in the form of high quality public transport and safe cycling and walking infrastructure must be provided.

Together with local authorities, the EU should take more action to promote walking and cycling in urban mobility. In this area, joined-up thinking between transport and health authorities could be very beneficial to illustrate the multiple health gains (also environmental, financial, social) of reducing motorised traffic, increasing physical exercise and reducing stress levels. Promotion actions and investment in cycling and pedestrian facilities and infrastructure (e.g. designated car-free cycle lanes, pedestrian zones, etc.) could also be supported at European level.

The EU should further support the development of demand management solutions, including establishing low-emissions zones and urban charging schemes. There are many examples from across the EU including environmental zones, urban charging schemes, designated cycle lanes, restricted parking policy, park and ride, etc. Further development of networks to exchange expertise should be supported by the EU. The Commission should investigate appropriate financial means to support research, development and set-up of systems or pilot schemes.

Promotion of sustainable mobility should be facilitated for private sector partners. Businesses should be encouraged to work together with the local community to promote sustainable mobility and improve access to their business-location, such as introducing company travel plans, parking management measures, etc. A European platform for best practice exchange and research should be established with regard to community travel planning, including networks of local and regional authorities, public transport companies, employers, schools, hospitals and other facilities.

Support for clean and energy efficient vehicles

Q5-6.) How should joint green procurement be promoted? Should criteria or guidance be set out for the definition of Green Zones?

T&E believes that the inclusion of life-time costs for pollutants, CO₂ emissions and fuel consumption into public procurement criteria would be an effective approach. Preference should be given to accelerated application of the latest Euro standard adopted in European legislation.

Ambitious vehicle emissions standards for air pollutants and noise, as well as fuel efficiency/CO₂ emissions standards should be set for all vehicles. More stringent application of effective air quality standards is urgently needed.

A flexible system should be established for clean *and quiet* public procurement that sets objectives and an assessment framework, but leaves local, regional and national authorities free to decide how to meet the targets.

Additionally, fleet average CO₂ emission performance for light duty fleets should be set that are clearly more ambitious than the EU overall targets. SUVs and vehicles with otherwise excessive consumption (e.g. >225 g CO₂/km), bad pedestrian protection, or excessive noise levels should be excluded from procurement.

Quiet public procurement should include quiet public transport and freight vehicles, as well as quiet components including tyres, and complementary measures including quiet road surfaces. The PIEK programme in the Netherlands produced for example a 'whisper truck' designed to be extra-quiet for night-time deliveries: http://www.piek.org/engels/home_eng.htm. Best practice for quiet vehicles needs to be more widely promoted.

The EU could provide non-binding guidance to cities on how to design green zones, low emissions zones or urban charging to best suit local conditions and specific policy objectives. A key role for the EU is to ensure that such schemes are transparent, understandable, interoperable and enforceable between Member States.

Financing urban transport improvements

Q21.) How could existing financial instruments such as structural and cohesion funds be better used in a coherent way to support integrated and sustainable urban transport?

There are many budget lines from different policy areas relating to transport and infrastructure (inter alia: TEN-t, Marco Polo, structural, cohesion, regional development, FP7, EIB loans, etc.). Within all budget lines, the Commission must prioritise sustainability criteria and compare all relevant environmental impacts (including climate change impacts of induced traffic, for example) as a condition for provision of funds. The Commission should urge Member States to allocate a greater proportion of funds to collective urban transport projects, with better cost-benefit ratios (value for money), and benefits to a greater number of transport users and residents than infrastructure mega-projects.

Transport and regional development policies (including EIB loans) that are geared to allocate massive amounts of money to a relatively small number of mega-projects should be reconsidered in terms of total “European added value” to citizens and transport users. Minimum project cost thresholds for EU funding should be abolished or reduced, as this brings a risk of inefficient use of funds. Given the fact that 60% of the total population and a very large proportion of businesses are located in urban areas, these funds should be allocated in a more equitable and sustainable way.

The EU could provide guidance and exchange of best practice to make calls for EU funding applications more accessible for urban and sustainable project promoters.

Innovative demand management

Q22,24.) How could economic instruments, in particular market-based instruments, support clean and energy efficient urban transport? Should towns and cities be encouraged to use urban charging? Is there a need for a general framework and/or guidance for urban charging? Should revenues be earmarked? Should external costs be internalised?

Experiences of urban road charging have demonstrated efficiency gains, higher load factors and reduced traffic volumes. As urban charging has proved an effective means to manage congestion and environmental impacts and provide revenue streams for public transport in several European cities, the EU should promote and expand on this win-win solution. The current knowledge-base, such as that provided by the CURACAO project can be built upon to provide non-binding guidance on establishing urban charging systems tailored to local conditions and policy objectives.

To accompany best practice exchange, the EU should ensure access to funding, or establish a dedicated funding instrument, to support the development and start-up of transport demand management schemes.

T&E supports the Commission’s initiative to carry out the IMPACT study on the internalisation of all external costs of transport. Under the subsidiarity principle however cities must be free to make external cost and charging calculations tailored to local conditions, to use revenues as they see fit, and to use any mix of policy instruments to address specific local priorities.

A central role for the EU in urban charging is to ensure effective cross-border enforcement and follow-up, and technical interoperability of charging systems between Member States.