



EUROCITIES STATEMENT ON THE WHITE PAPER ON TRANSPORT 2011

EU green transport vision must
support local flexibility

By mainstreaming urban transport into the new 2050 transport roadmap, the European Commission has taken an important step towards a more competitive and sustainable EU.

As EUROCITIES, the political platform representing the interests of more than 130 large cities in Europe, we welcome the strategic leadership shown by the Commission in the new EU transport roadmap and are committed to continuing and enhancing a constructive dialogue with the EU institutions with the common aim of improving urban mobility in the EU:

- more specifically, the emphasis on **decarbonisation of urban transport** in the White Paper is encouraging and gives leverage to member states and local authorities to push for more sustainability. The promotion of low or zero carbon technologies for vehicles is one aspect of a broader strategy on mobility that should promote a modal shift to public transport, cycling and walking;
- the reference to the new **TEN-T strategy** also rightly highlights the importance of cities, which are crucial nodes on the network.

As the Commission develops proposals to implement the 40 policy areas mentioned in the new roadmap, we trust that cities will be fully involved in consultation processes to ensure that the ability of local authorities to develop and deliver effective transport solutions is guaranteed. We, however, have reservations on:

- **Mandatory urban mobility plans** - we support the development of urban mobility plans but fear that if these are made mandatory in EU legislation, they may compromise the flexibility cities require to ensure transport solutions are tailored to their needs.
- **A legal framework on access restriction schemes and road user charging** - these are local competences that are best addressed by ambitious and innovative local authorities according to local circumstances.

Recommendations

We believe it is important for EU institutions to:

- maintain the current level of flexibility that cities have to plan urban mobility and to use demand management tools
- promote the take up, on a voluntary basis only, of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans throughout Europe
- promote a modal shift to public transport, cycling, walking, car-sharing
- support cities in facing challenges such as climate change and trends towards growing mobility by providing guidance and financial resources
- stimulate the deployment of best practice on urban mobility between cities

The recognition of mobility in urban areas and the role of cities is integral to the achievement of EU targets for more sustainable mobility patterns. The Commission's emphasis on the urban dimension of transportation, for the first time mainstreamed in a White Paper on Transport, provides leverage to cities in overcoming numerous challenges such as climate change. This is viewed as an important step by our network, since more than 75% of EU citizens live in urban areas and as cities are the centres of competitiveness and innovation.

The revised White Paper on Transport also recognises both the increase in traffic in cities and the impact of transport on the urban environment as crucial issues. Strategies leading to a reduction of emissions from vehicles result in a better quality of life in cities. The new roadmap also rightly addresses noise in addition to gaseous emissions. We particularly welcome the following aspects, which have the potential to make a real difference to peoples' lives:

- the intention to consolidate the Trans-European Transport Networks towards intermodal freight axes, to link the high speed rail network to airports and to enhance the connection of metropolitan regions and other economic 'hotspots' to the high level transport networks
- targeting the requirements of 'soft' modes of transportation, e.g. pedestrians and cyclists, especially regarding safety issues
- reducing road fatalities, making infrastructure and vehicles safer
- initiatives to increase the quality and reliability of transportation services
- introducing vehicle noise standards
- ensuring CO₂ and vehicle emissions are reduced under real-world driving conditions with a revised test cycle by 2013
- promoting the take up of fuel efficient and quieter tyres, etc.

Yet, in order to improve urban life and relieve congestion in cities, further measures should be more clearly promoted in the EU transport strategy, such as a shift towards soft modes, public transport and car-sharing.

Furthermore, if we want urban transport to contribute to a high quality of life for our 500 million Europeans, we must ensure that our cities have the necessary flexibility to adapt measures to the local conditions. As previously stated, we have reservations about:

- **Introducing mandatory urban mobility plans** (initiative 31): Although taking steps towards integrated transport planning is essential, imposing mandatory urban mobility plans is an EU measure that may compromise ambitions for transport and mobility in cities. While Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans are increasingly being taken up by cities and are rightly promoted by the EU, cities need flexibility and solutions that are tailored to their specific needs. Large cities in particular often have an integrated approach to planning, which means that their urban mobility plans may be a part of other urban plans. No mandatory 'one-size-fits-all' solution can be applied at the local level in terms of urban mobility planning.
- **Developing a legal framework on access restriction schemes and road user charging** (initiative 32) is a second point of contention. Cities must be free to innovate and carry forward ambitious mobility solutions. Instead of a legal framework, we would prefer EU guidance and improved information to users, e.g. on access restriction zones via a central EU website/database, available in multiple languages and providing an overview of all access restriction zones across Europe (and which could possibly provide a link to individual city websites in order to process any registration or payment). We would be happy to establish a dialogue with EU institutions and other relevant stakeholders to resolve any issues arising from the establishment of access restriction zones.