



# City Dialogue

on mobility measures in response to COVID-19

22 April 2020



Given the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on our cities, and specifically its implications for sustainable urban mobility, on 22 April 2020, EURO CITIES organised a city-to-city online dialogue on mobility measures currently adopted in European cities in response to COVID-19. During the city dialogue we had the chance to discuss how to keep a balance between safety measures to tackle the COVID-19 health crisis and promoting sustainable mobility in these challenging times.

Here below you can find the main takeaways from the discussion as well as the key questions we will address during the next city dialogue which will focus on the economic impact of the crisis in the urban mobility context.

The [video recording](#) of the city dialogue is [available here](#). Please feel free to share it with your colleagues!

## Active mobility:

Can the COVID-19 crisis be an opportunity to reallocate urban space for active modes and step-up cities' efforts in promoting active mobility?

Cities are leading the way in adopting temporary and permanent measures in order to promote active mobility (walking and cycling) as a key solution both during the COVID19 health crisis and for the post-lockdown. The adoption and use of active modes of transport can bring enormous health and environmental benefits and will play a fundamental role when citizens will start going back to work and movements will be restored.

- Budapest has already started building 26 km of new bicycle lanes, completing the pre-existing bike lanes network. Moreover, after significantly reducing the price for using the bike-sharing system, usage of shared bikes increased by 20%. Communication campaigns - on both social media and the city transport operator app - is heavily promoting active mobility. (Map of the new bike lanes in Annex I below)
- Vienna is converting more and more streets to 'shared spaces' - streets with a speed limit of 20 km/h - while a recent change in the federal law allowed the complete closure to car traffic on streets with narrow sidewalks (less than 2 km), so that people can walk on the street and respect physical distancing. (The [complete map is available here](#))
- Milan just launched an [ambitious scheme to reduce car usage after lockdown](#). Called 'strade aperte', 'open streets', the plan aims at reallocating 35km of street space from cars to cycling and walking. Work should start by the beginning of May with a new cycle lane and expanded pavements on Corso

Buenos Aires, one of the city's most important shopping arteries. The rest of the work will be completed by the end of the summer.

- Paris announced it will create [650 Kilometers Of Post-Lockdown Cycleways](#)
- Within the entire inner city area of Brussels priority will be given to pedestrians and cyclists and vehicles will have to respect a [20km/h speed limit](#).

More examples are emerging in various cities across Europe. 21% of our city dialogue participants confirmed that their city has already a plan in place for the promotion of active modes during and after the end of the lockdown. Additionally, 21% of the cities participating in the dialogue stated that they are putting in place special measures. (i.e. temporary bicycle lanes, widening sidewalks) and 24% that they are evaluating the implementation of special measures. Active mobility has an important role to play to compensate for the decreased capacity of PT, especially in the post-lockdown phase, avoiding people to shift back to individual motorised means once they will be allowed to go out again.

Moreover, with more and more evidence on the [link between pre-existing poor air quality and severity of the COVID-19 health outbreak](#), cities have the chance to send a clear message: active mobility is the crucial link between citizens health, environmental concerns and freedom of movement.

As emerged during the city dialogue, this crisis is an opportunity to establishing a new narrative and a new normal. If you are interested in working with the EUROCITIES mobility team on this specific topic please send an email at: [arianna.americo@eurocities.eu](mailto:arianna.americo@eurocities.eu) with the subject line "Healthy cities: starting today". We are happy to further discuss with you how our network can support your efforts in this realm. Plus, please keep an eye on the next [EUROCITIES Mobility Forum meeting 'Sustainable mobility in healthy cities'](#).

### **Public transport:**

Public transport has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. The response from the public transport sector has been prompt and measures have been taken to limit the spread of the virus and ensure safety for users.

You can read more about the measures taken in [Madrid here](#), in [Budapest here](#) and in [London here](#). Moreover, here below you can find a list of preventive measures that cities and public transport authorities have put into place to protect staff and passengers:

- Ensure that all workers receive the latest and most accurate information about COVID 19 including ways to limit/avoid transmission;
- Provide staff, especially drivers, with hand sanitising products and other appropriate means to limit the spread of the virus, taking into account the availability of the local facilities;
- Regular deep cleaning and disinfection of transport vehicles and assets touched by the transport users (such as ticketing devices...);
- Limit the interactions of drivers with passengers (for example no cash ticket sales onboard, allowing rear-door boarding only...);
- Adapt the level of service according to the reduction of travel demand in line with regular business procedures and with decisions taken by public authorities (e.g. night services and school services are suspended in some cities, some networks are following weekend or school holidays timetables...);
- Provide dedicated services to healthcare personnel and any other category of personnel falling under essential services;
- Temporarily release from active service, staff members with a higher risk of infection (e.g. older staff members over 60, people with a chronic health condition, etc.);
- Use of masks for drivers and passengers is becoming mandatory in more and more cities.

From our city dialogue, a great sense of urgency emerged in terms of preparing for the 'day after'. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on public transport relates mainly to the decrease in revenues (in some cities the reduction in patronage reaches 85%) and the additional costs needed to disinfect and implement physical distancing measures in transport vehicles and infrastructure. Moreover, cities raised crucial questions regarding the challenge of maintaining trust in public transport, and to avoid a catastrophic shift to individual car usage after the end of lockdown.

Many questions were raised concerning the future:

- How to manage the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on public transport?

- How to rebuild trust in public transport among passengers?
- How will the offer change to ensure physical distancing on the vehicles once more movements will be allowed in cities?
- How to mitigate the short and long-term impacts of the crisis to avoid more individual car usage, more congestions, more pollution?
- How will the crisis and the resulting large public deficit affect future plans for sustainable urban mobility?

These questions will be at the core of the next EUROCITIES City Dialogue. If you want to share your city's experience and plans for the 'day after' please send an email at: [arianna.americo@eurocities.eu](mailto:arianna.americo@eurocities.eu) with the subject line 'Post-corona mobility'.

### **Urban Vehicles Access Regulations (UVARs) and parking:**

Temporary measures were also adopted by cities in order to allow residents to use their car to reach areas normally restricted by low emission zones and to park vehicles without fees. During the city dialogue we explored with Milan the reasons behind this decision. The city is taking a 'soft approach', understanding concerns citizens might have at the moment in using public transport while focusing on providing alternatives for the post-lockdown. To achieve this Milan just launched an ambitious [scheme to reduce car usage after lockdown](#).

The Madrid city council has as well suspended parking fees. The offer of free parking had already been in operation in areas surrounding hospitals for a few days, in order to make access easier for staff and patients, but has now been extended throughout the city.

As revenues from parking/UVARs are valid source of income especially in this crisis, it is crucial to assess the impact of these decisions. We would therefore like to discuss with you the implications and challenges for city authorities related to these decisions during the next city dialogue.

If you want to share your city's challenges and solutions on this subject send an email at: [arianna.americo@eurocities.eu](mailto:arianna.americo@eurocities.eu) with the subject line 'Post-corona mobility'.

### **Shared mobility and homeworking:**

Shared mobility as well as homeworking could potentially offer solutions for the post-corona phase. As we will start going back to work, it is of paramount importance that the majority of people previously using public transport don't switch to cars.

Shared mobility services best practices include:

- Regular cleaning and disinfection of vehicles and dock stations carried out by the providers;
- Recommendation to wear gloves for the users;
- Recommendation to clean surfaces before and after using shared vehicles;
- Special prices for subscriptions and fares.

Concerning the promotion of homeworking for the post-corona phase, Milan highlighted how the role of smart working and flexible working hours is included in their '[Milano 2020 strategy](#)'. The strategy - currently undergoing a [public feedback process](#) - stresses the need for a (re)organisation of the times of the city in order to avoid peak-hour jams, for example rethinking opening hours for shops or school timetables as well as coordinating with companies for a general differentiation of working hours.

Information about the next city dialogue will be circulated in May. Do you want to contribute as a speaker in our next dialogue? [Contact us!](#)

## Useful links

- [Video recording of the city dialogue](#)
- [Mobility related news on the EUROCITIES COVIDnews website](#)
- [EUROCITIES calendar](#) (future city dialogues will be included on this webpage)
- [WHO recommendations related to mobility during the COVID19 health crisis](#)
- [Milan mobility monitoring online tool \(in Italian\)](#)
- [Rome mobility monitoring online tool \(in Italian\)](#)
- [Shared document on local actions affecting walking and cycling during social distancing](#)  
(Mainly focusing on the US)

Annex I: Budapest - bicycle network with new temporary lanes in red



**Kerékpárforgalmi főhálózat**  
Main cycling network

