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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

Action Plan on Urban Mobility

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Action Plan on Urban Mobility

1. Introduction

In 2007, 72%¹ of the European population lived in urban areas, which are key to growth and employment. Cities need efficient transport systems to support their economy and the welfare of their inhabitants. Around 85% of the EU's GDP is generated in cities. Urban areas face today the challenge of making transport sustainable in environmental (CO₂, air pollution, noise) and competitiveness (congestion) terms while at the same time addressing social concerns. These range from the need to respond to health problems and demographic trends, fostering economic and social cohesion to taking into account the needs of persons with reduced mobility, families and children.

Urban mobility is of growing concern to citizens. Nine out of ten EU citizens believe that the traffic situation in their area should be improved². The choices that people make in the way they travel will affect not only future urban development but also the economic well-being of citizens and companies. It will also be essential for the success of the EU's overall strategy to combat climate change, achieve the 20-20-20 objective³ and to promote cohesion.

Urban mobility is also a central component of long-distance transport. Most transport, both passengers and freight, starts and ends in urban areas and passes through several urban areas on its way. Urban areas should provide efficient interconnection points for the trans-European transport network and offer efficient 'last mile' transport for both freight and passengers. They are thus vital to the competitiveness and sustainability of our future European transport system.

The Commission's recent Communication on a sustainable future for transport⁴ has identified urbanisation and its impacts on transport as one of the main challenges in making the transport system more sustainable. It calls for effective and coordinated action to address the challenge of urban mobility and suggests a framework at EU level to make it easier for local authorities to take measures.

The responsibility for urban mobility policies lies primarily with local, regional and national authorities. Nevertheless, decisions adopted at local level are not taken in isolation but within the framework provided by national, regional and EU policy and legislation. Therefore the Commission believes that much is to be gained from working together in order to support action at local, regional and national levels and to provide for a partnership approach while fully respecting the different competences and responsibilities of all actors involved.

¹ United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects: The 2007 Revision.

² Attitudes on issues related to EU Transport Policy. Flash Eurobarometer 206b, July 2007.

³ Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council (8/9 March 2007).

⁴ COM (2009) 279.

The consultation and debate that followed the publication of the Green Paper on Urban Mobility⁵ confirmed and clarified the added value of action at EU level⁶. This Action Plan builds on the suggestions made by stakeholders, citizens individually and through their representative groupings, and European institutions and bodies.

The European Parliament adopted a Resolution on the Green Paper on 9 July 2008⁷ and an own-initiative Report on an Action Plan on Urban Mobility on 23 April 2009⁸. The European Economic and Social Committee adopted its Opinion on the Green Paper on 29 May 2008⁹ and the Committee of the Regions did so on 9 April 2008¹⁰. The Committee of the Regions adopted an Opinion on the European Parliament's Report on 21 April 2009¹¹. The Council has also held discussions on this subject¹².

Drawing on the consultation following the presentation of the Green Paper, this Action Plan sets out a coherent framework for EU initiatives in the area of urban mobility while respecting the principle of subsidiarity. It will do this by encouraging and supporting the development of sustainable urban mobility policies that help to achieve general EU objectives, for example through fostering the exchange of best practice and providing funding. The Commission is conscious that urban areas across the EU may face different challenges, depending on their geographic location, their size or their relative wealth. It has no intention of prescribing one-size-fits-all or top-down solutions.

The Action Plan proposes short- and medium-term practical actions to be launched progressively from now until 2012, addressing specific issues related to urban mobility in an integrated way. The Commission offers a partnership to local, regional and national authorities based on their voluntary commitment to co-operate in selected areas of mutual concern. It invites also other stakeholders in the Member States, citizens and industry, to closely co-operate, paying particular attention to the mobility needs of vulnerable groups such as elderly, low-income groups and persons with disabilities, whose mobility is reduced due to a physical, intellectual or sensory disability or impairment, or as a result of age.

2. What role for the EU?

Urban transport systems are integral elements of the European transport system and as such an integral part of the Common Transport Policy under Articles 70 to 80 EC Treaty. In addition, other EU policies (cohesion policy, environment policy, health policy, etc.) cannot achieve their objectives without taking into account urban specificities, including urban mobility.

In recent years, EU policy and legislation relevant to urban mobility has been developed. Significant funding has been provided through the Structural and Cohesion Funds. EU-funded initiatives, often supported by the Framework Programmes for research and technological

⁵ COM(2007) 551.

⁶ For a summary of the results of the consultation see:
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/urban/urban_mobility/green_paper/green_paper_en.htm.

⁷ INI/2008/2041.

⁸ INI/2008/2217.

⁹ TEN/320 - CESE 982/2008.

¹⁰ CdR 236/2007.

¹¹ CdR 417/2008.

¹² http://www.ue2008.fr/PFUE/site/PFUE/lang/en/reunion_informelle_des_ministres_des_transports.html.

development, have helped to develop a wealth of innovative approaches. EU-wide dissemination and replication of these approaches can enable public authorities to achieve more, better and at lower cost.

Developing efficient transport systems in urban areas has become an increasingly complex task with both congested cities and greater urban sprawl. Public authorities have an essential role in providing the planning, the funding and the regulatory framework. The EU can stimulate authorities at local, regional and national level to adopt the long-term integrated policies that are very much needed in complex environments.

The EU can also help authorities to find solutions that are interoperable and facilitate smoother functioning of the Single Market. Compatible rules, schemes and technologies facilitate implementation and enforcement. Agreeing standards for the whole of the Single Market enables larger volume production, lowering the cost for the customer.

Urban areas are becoming laboratories for technological and organisational innovation, changing patterns of mobility and new funding solutions. The EU has an interest in sharing innovative solutions of local policies for the benefit of transport operators and citizens alike and to ensure the efficiency of the European transport system through effective integration, interoperability and interconnection. In this context, industry has a key contribution to make to the solution of the future challenges.

Finally, sustainable urban mobility is of growing importance for the relationships with our neighbours and for the global society, which is becoming increasingly concentrated in urban agglomerations. Successful action under this Action Plan can help all actors in the EU and its industry to actively shape a future global society focused on citizens' needs, harmonious living, quality of life and sustainability.

3. A programme of actions to support sustainable urban mobility

The actions proposed are centred on six themes responding to the main messages that emerged from the Green Paper consultation. They will be implemented through existing EU programmes and instruments. The actions complement each other and other EU initiatives. Annex 1 presents an overview of the actions, including their timing.

Theme 1 — Promoting integrated policies

An integrated approach can best deal with the complexity of urban transport systems, the governance issues and the links between cities and their surrounding areas or regions, the interdependence between transport modes, the limitations within urban space and the role of urban systems in the wider European transport system. An integrated approach is not only needed for the development of transport infrastructure and services, but also for policy making to link transport with environment protection¹³, healthy environments, land use planning, housing, social aspects of accessibility and mobility as well as industrial policy. Developing strategic, integrated transport planning, establishing appropriate mobility planning organisations and setting realistic targets are essential to address the long-term challenges of urban mobility, while supporting also cooperation with and between transport operators.

¹³ For example ensuring coherence between sustainable urban mobility plans and air quality plans which are prepared in the framework of EU air quality legislation.

Action 1 — Accelerating the take-up of sustainable urban mobility plans

In the short term, following up the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment¹⁴, the Commission will support local authorities in developing sustainable urban mobility plans covering freight and passenger transport in urban and peri-urban areas. It will provide guidance material, promote best practice exchange, identify benchmarks, and support educational activities for urban mobility professionals. In the longer term, the Commission could take further steps, for example through incentives and recommendations.

Whenever possible, the Commission will encourage Member States to provide platforms for mutual learning and sharing of experiences and best practices that would foster the development of sustainable urban mobility policies. The Commission will also introduce an urban mobility dimension in the Covenant of Mayors¹⁵ in order to promote an integrated approach linking energy and climate change with transport. It will encourage the incorporation of transport and mobility issues in the Sustainable Energy Action Plans to be prepared by the cities participating in the Covenant.

Action 2 — Sustainable urban mobility and regional policy

To increase awareness of the funding available from the Structural and Cohesion Funds and the European Investment Bank, the Commission envisages issuing information on the link between sustainable urban mobility measures and regional policy objectives under the current Community and national framework conditions. It will address the wider framework for sustainable urban development as well as the link between urban transport and the trans-European transport network. The Commission will also list funding opportunities and explain the application of State aid and public procurement rules.

Action 3 — Transport for healthy urban environments

Sustainable urban transport can play a role in creating healthy environments and contribute to reducing non-communicable diseases such as respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases and injury prevention. The Commission supports the development of partnerships towards healthy environments and will explore, in the context of its work on public health, notably in the implementation of the strategies on nutrition, overweight and obesity, environment and health, injury prevention and cancer, further synergies between public health and transport policy.

Theme 2 — Focusing on citizens

High quality and affordable public transport is the backbone of a sustainable urban transport system. Reliability, information, safety and ease of access are vital for attractive bus, metro, tram and trolleybus services, rail or ships. Community legislation already regulates large parts of public transport investment and operations¹⁶. Transparent contracts have widespread benefits and can stimulate innovation in services and technology. Ensuring a high level of protection of passenger rights, including of passengers with reduced mobility, is also high on

¹⁴ COM(2005) 718.

¹⁵ www.eumayors.eu.

¹⁶ Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 on public transport and Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC on public procurement.

the Commission's agenda. Legislation is in place for rail services¹⁷ and has recently been proposed for bus and coach services¹⁸ as well as for maritime and inland waterway services¹⁹.

Action 4 — Platform on passenger rights in urban public transport

The Commission will moderate a dialogue with stakeholders, including organisations representing operators, authorities, employees and user groups, in order to identify EU-wide best practices and conditions for strengthening passenger rights in urban public transport. Building on sectoral initiatives and complementing the Commission's regulatory approach, the aim is to put a set of ambitious voluntary commitments in place, including quality indicators, commitments to protect the rights of travellers and of persons with reduced mobility as well as commonly agreed complaint procedures, and reporting mechanisms.

Action 5 — Improving accessibility for persons with reduced mobility

Persons with disabilities have the right of access to urban transport on equal terms with the rest of the population but in reality access is often insufficient and sometimes non-existent. Considerable achievements have been made, for example on the use of low platform buses. Other modes of public transport such as subways remain often largely inaccessible. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, signed since 2007 by the European Community and all Member States, contains clear obligations.

Article 9 states "Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to (...) transportation, both in urban and in rural areas". The Commission will work with Member States to achieve full compliance with these obligations by including the urban mobility dimension in the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and by developing appropriate quality indicators and reporting mechanisms. It will also support further targeted activities under FP7.

Action 6 — Improving travel information

The Commission will work with public transport operators and authorities on facilitating the provision of travel information through different media, including information addressing the needs of disabled persons. It will also support the development of national and regional multimodal journey planners, and links between existing planners, with the ultimate aim of providing users with a public transport travel portal at EU level on the internet. There will be a particular focus on the main nodes in the TEN-T network and their local and regional connections.

Action 7 — Access to green zones

The Commission will launch a study on the different access rules for the different types of green zones across the EU in order to improve knowledge on how the different systems work in practice. On the basis of the study results, the Commission will facilitate the exchange of good practices.

¹⁷ Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations.

¹⁸ COM(2008) 817.

¹⁹ COM(2008) 816.

Action 8 — Campaigns on sustainable mobility behaviour

Education, information and awareness-raising campaigns play an important role in the creation of a new culture for urban mobility. The Commission will continue to support the organisation of campaigns at all levels, including the European Mobility Week. For the European Mobility Week, the Commission will optimise the existing award scheme and consider a special award to encourage the adoption of sustainable urban mobility plans.

Action 9 — Energy-efficient driving as part of driving education

Energy-efficient driving is already a mandatory part of the training and testing of professional drivers. The Commission will discuss with Member States, within the regulatory committee on driving licences, if and how energy-efficient driving could be included in driving tests for private drivers, and will consider follow-up actions and give respective support. This topic will also be addressed in the next Road Safety Action Programme.

Theme 3 — Greening urban transport

Environmentally friendly policies have been introduced in many cities across the EU. Action at EU level can help to strengthen markets for new, clean vehicle technologies and alternative fuels. This will directly support EU industry, promote healthy environments and contribute to the recovery of the European economy. By making users pay for the external costs which they cause (environmental, congestion and other costs) according to the polluter pays principle, the internalisation of external costs can encourage transport users to switch over time to cleaner vehicles or transport modes, to use less congested infrastructure or to travel at different times. EC rules on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of infrastructure²⁰ do not prevent the non-discriminatory application of regulatory charges in urban areas to reduce traffic congestion and environmental impacts.

Action 10 — Research and demonstration projects for lower and zero emission vehicles

The Commission will continue its support for research and demonstration projects funded through the Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (FP7) to facilitate the market introduction of lower and zero emission vehicles and alternative fuels, aiming to reduce dependency on fossil fuels. This was done, for example, through the CIVITAS Initiative²¹ as well as projects on the use of hydrogen, biofuels and hybrid vehicles in urban transport.

In the framework of the European Economic Recovery Plan, the Commission has launched the European Green Cars Initiative²². In 2009, the Commission will fund new projects related to electric vehicles, which will cover batteries, electric power trains and auxiliaries, information and communication technologies and an "electromobility" demonstration project. This project will focus on electric vehicles and related infrastructure in urban areas and it will integrate national initiatives and support the standardisation of recharging infrastructure.

Action 11 — Internet guide on clean and energy-efficient vehicles

²⁰ Directive 1999/62/EC and the Commission's proposal for the revision of the directive on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of infrastructure - COM(2008) 433.

²¹ www.civitas.eu.

²² http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/info/green_cars_initiative_en.html.

The Commission will continue to develop an internet-based guide on clean and energy-efficient vehicles, including an overview of the market, legislation and support schemes. The website will also provide support for the joint procurement of vehicles for public services while market developments will be monitored to preserve competition. This service will facilitate the implementation of the new Directive on clean and energy-efficient vehicles²³.

Action 12 — Study on urban aspects of the internalisation of external costs

Once the EU framework for internalisation of external costs is established, and taking into account the conclusions of the debate launched by the Communication on a sustainable future for transport, the Commission will launch a methodological study on the urban aspects of the internalisation. The study will look at the effectiveness and efficiency of various pricing solutions, including implementation issues such as public acceptability, social consequences, cost recovery, availability of ITS (intelligent transport systems) tools and how urban pricing policies and other green zone arrangements can be effectively combined.

Action 13 — Information exchange on urban pricing schemes

The Commission will facilitate information exchange among experts and policy-makers on urban pricing schemes in the EU. This will use input from existing initiatives²⁴ and include information on consultation processes, scheme design, information provision to citizens, public acceptance, operating costs and revenue, technological aspects and the impact on the environment. The conclusions will feed into the Commission's work on the internalisation of external costs.

Theme 4 — Strengthening funding

To reap the benefits of sustainable urban mobility, investment is often needed in infrastructure, vehicles, new technologies, improved services, etc. Most of the expense is covered by local, regional or national sources. Local sources of funding are diverse and can include local taxes, passenger transport charges, parking fees, green zone charges and urban pricing, and private funding. The growing needs for funding complex transport systems and the likely decrease in the availability of public financing are the main challenges for the future. The use of EU funding, including European Investment Bank instruments, can provide significant incentives and help leverage private funds. In the short term, the Commission can help authorities and stakeholders to explore existing funding opportunities and develop innovative public-private partnership schemes.

Action 14 — Optimising existing funding sources

The Structural and Cohesion Funds, with over 8 billion euros allocated to clean urban transport during the current financial planning period, are a very important EU funding source for investment in infrastructure and rolling stock. Under the "Transport theme" of FP7 there is, for the first time, a priority area dedicated to sustainable urban mobility. The Commission will, in addition to its ongoing activities, consider new targeted RTD and demonstration activities relevant for urban mobility.

²³ Directive 2009/33/EC.

²⁴ For example www.curacaoproject.eu.

The Commission will maintain its support for STEER, the sub-programme under Intelligent Energy Europe²⁵ which deals with the energy aspects of transport, and URBACT²⁶. The Information & Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme can offer support to pilot projects addressing urban mobility. Finally, funding has been allocated to urban mobility actions in priority areas of the Green Paper on urban mobility, following a call for proposals launched in 2008.

Action 15 — Analysing the needs for future funding

The Commission will continue to financially support the successful CIVITAS Initiative beyond the third generation of projects that started in 2008. It has launched a review to define the most appropriate way forward to a CIVITAS FUTURA. It will also examine the future funding needs that urban mobility improvements involve as part of its overall reflection on the next multi-annual financial framework.

Theme 5 — Sharing experience and knowledge

The Commission will help stakeholders capitalise on existing experience and support the exchange of information, in particular on model schemes developed through Community programmes. Action at EU level can be decisive in ensuring the collection, sharing and comparison of data, statistics and information. These are currently missing but are necessary for the proper design of policies, for example on the procurement of public transport services, internalisation of external costs or integrated transport and land use planning. It can also help cities with less experience, knowledge and financial resources to capitalise on the practices developed by cities that are more advanced in the area of sustainable urban mobility, for example in areas such as pedestrian and cyclist safety where an exchange of best practice can help improve the safety of vulnerable road users in urban areas.

Action 16 — Upgrading data and statistics

To address the lack of data and statistics, the Commission will launch a study on how to improve data collection for urban transport and mobility. Synergies with existing Commission activities will be explored.

Action 17 — Setting up an urban mobility observatory

The Commission will set up an urban mobility observatory for urban transport practitioners in the form of a virtual platform²⁷ to share information, data and statistics, monitor developments and facilitate the exchange of best practices. The platform will include a database with information on the wide range of tested solutions already in place, training and educational material, staff exchange programmes, and other support tools. It will also provide an overview of EU legislation and financial instruments relevant to urban mobility.

Action 18 — Contributing to international dialogue and information exchange

Local and regional authorities across the world are confronted with similar mobility challenges. Tackling climate change, facilitating international trade, addressing the security of

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/index_en.html.

²⁶ <http://urbact.eu>

²⁷ Building on existing initiatives, for example www.eltis.org.

energy supplies, securing seamless transport flows and ensuring social equity are issues of global relevance. Using existing platforms and financial mechanisms, the Commission will facilitate dialogue, city-twinning, and information exchange on urban mobility with neighbouring regions and global partners. As a first step, the Commission will open the CIVITAS Forum network to cities from the Eastern neighbourhood, Mediterranean and African regions²⁸. For the longer term, the Commission will include this dimension in the development of CIVITAS FUTURA and consider further dedicated activities under FP7.

Theme 6 — Optimising urban mobility

Effective integration, interoperability and interconnection between different transport networks are key features of an efficient transport system. This can facilitate modal shift towards more environmentally friendly modes of transport and efficient freight logistics. Affordable and family-friendly public transport solutions are key to encourage citizens to become less car-dependent, use public transport, walk and cycle more, and explore new forms of mobility, for example in the form of car-sharing, carpooling and bike-sharing. Alternative means of transport such as electric bicycles, scooters and motorbikes as well as taxis can also play a role. Company mobility management can influence travel behaviour by drawing the employee's attention towards sustainable transport options. Employers and public administrations can provide support through financial incentives and parking regulations.

Action 19 — Urban freight transport

The Commission intends to provide help on how to optimise urban logistics efficiency, including on improving the links between long-distance, inter-urban and urban freight transport, aiming to ensure efficient 'last mile' delivery. It will focus on how to better incorporate freight transport in local policies and plans and how to better manage and monitor transport flows. As part of its preparations, the Commission will organise a conference on urban freight transport in 2010. At the conference, the implementation of the urban initiatives in the Freight Logistics Action Plan²⁹ will also be assessed.

Action 20 — Intelligent transport systems (ITS) for urban mobility

The Commission envisages offering assistance on ITS applications for urban mobility to complement the ITS Action Plan³⁰. It will look at, for example, electronic ticketing and payment, traffic management, travel information, access regulation and demand management, and address the opportunities opened up by the European Galileo GNSS system. As a start, the Commission will launch a study on improving the interoperability of ticketing and payment systems across services and transport modes, including the use of smart cards in urban transport with a focus on major European destinations (airports, rail stations).

4. Looking ahead

The Commission will actively lead the implementation of this Action Plan. It will continue dialogue with stakeholders and set up appropriate steering mechanisms, also involving the

²⁸ COM(2009) 301.

²⁹ COM(2007) 607.

³⁰ COM(2008) 886.

Member States through, for example, the Joint Expert Group on Transport and Environment³¹. In 2012, the Commission will conduct a review of the implementation of this Action Plan and will assess the need for further action.

³¹ Established under the Council strategy on integration of the environment and sustainable development into transport policy; Council document 11717/99 TRANS 197 ENV 335, 11 October 1999.

Annex 1 — Overview of urban mobility actions

Action	No
Launch in 2009	
Accelerating the take-up of sustainable urban mobility plans	1
Improving travel information	6
Access to green zones	7
Research and demonstration projects for lower and zero emission vehicles	10
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Information exchange on urban pricing schemes	13
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Transport for healthy urban environments	3
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Analysing the needs for future funding	15
Upgrading data and statistics	16
Contributing to international dialogue and information exchange	18
Launch in 2011	
Sustainable urban mobility and regional policy	2
Improving accessibility for persons with reduced mobility	5
Study on urban aspects of the internalisation of external costs	12
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Urban freight transport	19
Intelligent transport systems (ITS) for urban mobility	20