

Brussels, 30 September 2009

Action Plan on Urban Mobility

What can the EU do?

The EU can stimulate cities to develop policies which will help to reach the EU objectives of combating climate change, creating an efficient European transport system and strengthening social cohesion.

With the Action Plan, the European Commission presents for the first time a comprehensive support package in the field of urban mobility. Local, regional and national authorities are free to use this support, and the tools that will be offered. Using them will help to address the challenge of sustainable urban mobility and facilitate their policy making. In addition, Europe's citizens and companies will benefit from this on a daily basis.

The actions foreseen will:

- Promote integrated policies to deal with the complexity of urban transport systems, governance issues and the necessary coherence between different policies, for example between urban mobility and cohesion policy, environment policy or health policy.
- Focus on citizens' needs by promoting reliable travel information and a high level of protection of passenger rights.
- Help to green urban transport by introducing new, clean vehicle technologies and alternative fuels and promoting smart charging to encourage transport users to change travel behaviour.
- Address funding by exploring existing funding opportunities, innovative public-private partnership schemes and possible new funding solutions.
- Support sharing experience and knowledge to enable better access to this information and help stakeholders to capitalise on these experiences and on relevant data and statistics.
- Optimise urban mobility to encourage effective integration, interoperability and interconnection between different transport networks.
- Improve road safety to achieve a high level of road safety, especially for vulnerable road users such as young people and the elderly.

Why an action plan now?

European towns and cities face ever-growing challenges to make urban transport sustainable. These challenges have been discussed in the Green Paper on urban mobility¹ that the Commission adopted in September 2007. They must be addressed if the European Union's overall strategy to combat climate change, achieve objectives for energy efficiency and renewable energies, and strengthen social and economic cohesion is to succeed.

¹ Towards a new culture for urban mobility. COM (2007) 551.

Nine out of ten EU citizens believe that the traffic situation in their area should be improved².

Citizens' travel affects not only urban development but also the economy. Towns and cities need free-flowing, efficient transport systems. But urban transport is also an essential component of long-distance transport. Most passengers and freight start and end their journeys in urban areas and pass through several urban areas on their way. Urban transport is thus a vital element of a competitive and sustainable European transport system.

Why does action at EU level add value?

In general local authorities are themselves best placed to define and implement urban mobility policies adapted to local circumstances. But they face common problems. The EU can support them and enable and encourage the development of a new culture for urban mobility in Europe, without prescribing one-size-fits-all or top-down solutions. This approach was supported by stakeholders during the consultation that followed the adoption of the Green Paper.

There is much to be gained from working together at EU level and mobilising EU resources to support action at local, regional and national levels.

The exchange of information and the development and testing of new solutions can be done efficiently at EU level. EU-wide dissemination and replication of new, innovative approaches can enable public authorities to achieve more, better and at lower cost.

What are the actions?

The Action Plan includes twenty actions addressing the following issues:

Improved information: To help making travel easier, the Commission will work with public transport operators and authorities on better travel information. It will study the different access rules for green or environmental zones that have been introduced across the EU and consider the need for further action.

Passenger rights: The Commission will work with stakeholders to agree a set of voluntary commitments on passenger rights in urban transport. In recognition of the fact that persons with disabilities have the right of access to urban transport on equal terms with the rest of the population, it will include urban mobility in the EU Disability Strategy.

Better planning: Integrated planning can provide a good response to the many mobility challenges that cities are faced with. To accelerate the take-up of sustainable urban mobility plans in cities and regions the Commission will prepare information material and launch promotional activities. It will also produce guidance documents on important aspects of these plans, such as urban freight distribution and intelligent transport systems for urban mobility.

Greener transport: Many citizens would like transport to become greener. The Commission will continue to support research and demonstration projects, for example on lower and zero-emission vehicles. It will set up an internet guide with information on clean and energy-efficient vehicles and discuss with Member States how energy-efficient driving could be included in private drivers' driving tests. The Commission will also discuss urban mobility issues with stakeholders from the health sector.

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

Sharing experiences: To help policy makers to share experiences, the Commission will establish a database with information on the wide range of tested solutions that are already in place. This database will also include an overview of EU legislation and financial instruments relevant to urban mobility and offer educational tools. The Commission will study how to improve the availability of data and statistics, facilitate information exchange on urban pricing and encourage international dialogue on urban mobility with Europe's neighbouring regions and global partners.

Funding: Finally, funding is often a key issue. The Commission will work to streamline existing EU funding sources and look at future funding needs. It will also prepare a guidance document on sustainable urban mobility and Cohesion Policy and study the effectiveness and efficiency of different urban transport pricing solutions. Education, information and awareness-raising campaigns play an important role in the creation of a new culture for urban mobility. The Commission will therefore continue to support the organisation of public awareness campaigns, for example the European Mobility Week.

When do the actions come into place?

The actions will be launched over the next four years. In 2012 the Commission will conduct a review of the implementation of this Action Plan and assess the need for further action.

For Further information

More information on the Action Plan on Urban Mobility can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/urban/urban_mobility/urban_mobility_en.htm