



**Local & Regional
Europe**

Urban Mobility Package

Support to local authorities' action in building sustainable local mobility plans

COM(2013) 913 final – Together towards competitive and resource-efficient urban mobility

April 2014

CEMR key messages

1. Addressing the mobility challenge is key for sustainable local development. Local authorities need to allocate sufficient time and funds to improve their urban transport infrastructure and mobility plans, and to respond to future trip demand
2. CEMR supports the new measured approach of the Commission regarding urban mobility, which consists in accompanying local authorities in their action to develop local mobility plans, without further binding legislation.
3. The Commission clearly recognises the primary role and competence of local authorities in planning local mobility strategies according to their local priorities and conditions.
4. The principle of subsidiarity and thus the competences of local and regional authorities have to be respected. Hence any European measure that would introduce mandatory local transport rules in the future will not be supported by local authorities, as well as attempts by the EU to impose common criteria, standards or harmonisation of urban transport policies.
5. Many local authorities have already set up mobility strategies and solutions; the European added value should then be in supporting the existing structures and services.
6. For CEMR, the EU action lies in the support it can provide to ensure a broad debate, facilitate exchange of best practices, stimulate research and innovation, and provide adapted financial support.
7. CEMR argues that support by the national and European levels is also necessary to have a stronger impact on the territories thanks to coherent frameworks built in a partnership with all levels of government.
8. Thus, it is essential that European and national associations of local authorities are directly represented in all the discussions of the Member States Expert Group on Urban Mobility, and its related working groups.
9. Finally, for CEMR, it clearly makes sense that local mobility plans are not limited to urban areas but extended to functional areas, including rural areas, as they are part of a wider place-based development strategy.

Context

On 17 December 2013, the European Commission published its “Urban Mobility Package”. The core element is the Communication “Together towards competitive and resource-efficient urban mobility”. It is complemented by an annex on the concept of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, and four staff working documents on urban logistics, urban access regulations, deployment of Intelligent Transport System (ITS) solutions in urban areas, and urban road safety.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and its members participated in the public consultation which led to this urban mobility package. The consultation was launched in 2012 by the European Commission on the urban dimension of European transport policy. At an early stage of the legislative process, CEMR could thus feed in the European Commission's reflections on urban mobility and areas where the EU could have an added value for actions at local level.

In 2011, CEMR also addressed the issues associated with access restriction schemes and sustainable urban mobility plans in its position on the white paper on transport and a statement on access restriction schemes in cities.

No new legislative proposals

As it is presented, the urban mobility package is not a binding strategy. It will only serve as a guidance for municipalities to implement sustainable mobility plans, and for Member States and the EU to create good conditions for the local action. High level of flexibility will be left to local authorities to respond with appropriate solutions to local mobility challenges, as each city is unique and requires unique solutions.

Due to previous meetings with the Commission, many European local authorities were concerned that the proposed Urban Mobility Package contained legally binding proposals on urban mobility. The Commission has no legal power to even propose minimum legal standards on urban mobility or local planning. Therefore CEMR and its members really welcome the change of position of the Commission towards non-binding rules on local mobility.

However CEMR would like to highlight that any future European measure that would introduce mandatory local mobility rules will not be supported by local authorities, in particular in the specific areas mentioned by the Commission in the communication. There is no “one size fits all” solution when it comes to urban mobility. CEMR reaffirms that it is opposed to any obligation upon local authorities regarding sustainable urban mobility plans and access restriction schemes, including green zones.

Support and guidance

For CEMR, the EU can indeed ensure a broad debate, support exchange of best practices across countries and local authorities, stimulate research and innovation and develop pilot projects, and provide adapted financial support to sustainable transport. We would however argue for more consolidation of the myriad of different schemes that are currently proposed: the Urban Mobility Observatory, the Urban Mobility Scoreboard, ELTIS, URBACT, Smart Cities and Communities, Civitas 2020, etc.

The EU is very well placed to propose common benchmarks and guidelines that can possibly be incorporated into national legislation. New EU non-binding guidelines are very welcomed to help local authorities develop and implement Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. The EU should recognise and build on the existing structures and services and what advanced cities have already developed and implemented in terms of local transport frameworks and solutions.

Likewise financial support is key to help local authorities, especially smaller municipalities which have less capacity, continue their efforts to develop sustainable local mobility strategies and new modes of transport, as well as maintain existing infrastructure and make them attractive. CEMR is pleased that the Commission intends to work closely with the competent authorities in the MS to ensure the best use of European Structural and Investment Funds, according to local needs and priorities.

There is an increasing pressure to finance public transport, so it is necessary to also find new forms of financing, through the combination of grants and financial engineering for instance.

However in the next programming period, after 2020, having a mobility plan should not become an ex-ante conditionality for the eligibility to the funds. It would add administrative burdens and bureaucracy for monitoring and reporting, whereas a multitude of legally-binding national planning provisions already exist. On the contrary, EU funding should support local municipalities' actions to meet some voluntary planning requirements.

Coherence and cooperation

Each level of government has its own competences, therefore a close cooperation between the different levels is necessary to provide a coherent framework for the promotion of sustainable territorial mobility strategies, across different policy fields (innovation, environment, air quality, cohesion, etc.). Small cities may not have the necessary technical capacity or the financial resources to invest in public transport systems. Higher levels of government would therefore have to work with them in order to provide economies of scale and the appropriate technical assistance, including capacity-building.

To improve the dialogue, CEMR and its members support the creation of a Member States expert group on urban mobility. Nevertheless it is crucial that European and national associations of local and regional authorities can directly take part in this process through the expert group and the various working groups on the specific topics: urban logistics, urban access regulations and road user charging, intelligent transport systems, urban road safety, and financing.

Territorial and integrated approach

Mobility cannot be reduced to transportation and transport infrastructure and services. The concept of mobility has to be placed in a holistic context and consider the social, economic, political, and physical constraints of mobility, and in particular follow a long-term, sustainable perspective. Such an integrated approach needs to take into account the societal and environmental challenges like demographic change, accessibility for all, specific needs for different citizens, air quality, CO2 emissions, use of renewable energy, etc. Local mobility is also integrated into a wider territorial development strategy.

Furthermore, sustainable local mobility plans are important for cities of all sizes and the issue does not only concern major cities. Mobility should not be limited to urban areas but has to be extended to functional areas and include rural and peri-urban areas. This is important for the development of integrated mobility solutions, comprising intercity transport for instance. Thus, local and regional authorities may need to create mobility bodies that set clear and measurable objectives, which can efficiently coordinate urban mobility services. Administrative boundaries don't always match the functional area, with each administration having separate mobility policies and transportation systems in place. This often leads to inefficiencies and unattractiveness due to uncoordinated operations, such as mismatching schedules or multiple fares. In large areas that are split into separate administrative zones for instance, efforts may need to be coordinated by a single body, in order to ensure efficiency through common planning and addressing the area as one, effectively cutting costs on infrastructure development.

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About CEMR

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the broadest organisation of local and regional authorities in Europe. Its members are over 50 national associations of municipalities and regions from 41 European countries. Together these associations represent some 150 000 local and regional authorities.

CEMR's objectives are twofold: to influence European legislation on behalf of local and regional authorities and to provide a platform for exchange between its member associations and their elected officials and experts.

Moreover, CEMR is the European section of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the worldwide organisation of local government.

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