



**COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS
CONSEIL DES COMMUNES ET REGIONS D'EUROPE**

CEMR Position paper

**Public consultation on the preparation of the
Green Paper on Urban Transport**

Brussels, 30th April 2007

- The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the European umbrella organisation of 50 national associations representing local and regional government in 36 countries. CEMR's membership represents local and regional authorities in both urban and rural areas. CEMR has a working group on transport issues.
- Transport is a key issue for local and regional governments and for the well-being of citizens. Good transportation systems and services are key to the competitiveness of territories. CEMR calls for EU sustainable mobility policies to be placed at the core of EU, national, regional and local actions. CEMR also asks for better quality public transport as well as the promotion of alternatives to the use of private cars.
- Four out of five EU citizens live in urban areas. Cities have to deal with a large share of airborne pollution and of greenhouse gases' emissions. Urban transport policies are therefore key for the well being of both our citizens and of our climate and planet.

Constructive subsidiarity in urban transport policies

- CEMR believes that the EU can bring some added value in policy areas and challenges that are common to EU cities in Europe. However, urban transport policies are local by their very nature. A strong level of subsidiarity must therefore be respected. Local elected representatives and practitioners know best the local conditions and needs, and what suits their citizens.
- CEMR welcomes the fact that the European Commission addresses urban transport specifically with the forthcoming publication of the Green Paper on this topic. This Green Paper provides the opportunity to notably have a wide discussion among EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities, industry and relevant stakeholders, on where the subsidiarity limit should be set in urban transport policies.
- Recent policy and legislative initiatives (regulation on local and regional public passenger transport, thematic strategy on urban environment, revised sustainable development strategy, clean vehicles directive, the Leipzig Charter) have shown that this issue is very sensitive and should be discussed with all relevant actors.
- The organisation of mobility in urban and local areas is to a considerable extent subject to the responsibility of local authorities and regions; as such local-self government should be respected. This, however, does not mean leaving them alone implement sustainable mobility objectives. Instead, it must mean their involvement in the decisions policy formulation and decision making process. Collaboration of all institutional levels can assist to achieve the greatest possible synergies in terms of regulations, intervention measures and financial support.

- The EU can nevertheless bring added value by, for instance :
 - providing clear legal and fiscal frameworks that set common principles while respecting subsidiarity and local self-government;
 - ensuring strong financial frameworks for urban transport (structural funds, EIB loans etc.), with priority given to public transport and sustainable modes of transport;
 - setting technical standards (e.g. vehicles, equipment, fuels etc.) and ensure interoperability;
 - promoting research and the exchange of best practice;
 - launching campaigns to raise awareness and promote the implementation of the Aalborg commitments;
 - integrating urban transport concerns into sectoral EU policies and removing barriers from EU legal provisions that may hinder the development of sound urban transport policies;
 - providing guidance (in all languages) to cities on how to develop sustainable urban transport plans and how to implement EU legislation that closely relate to urban transport, such as air quality directives.

Organisation and financing of local and regional public transport.

- CEMR reaffirms its strong commitment to preserving local and regional authorities' freedom of choice in managing public transport and welcomes the Commission's proposal for a new draft regulation on "Public passenger transport services by rail and road" that respects the principles of subsidiarity and local self-government. CEMR generally supports the Common Position agreed in the Council of Ministers in December 2006 and hopes that the European legislator will adopt a text which goes along these lines.
- CEMR is convinced that local and regional authorities have a vital role to play in guaranteeing services of general interest, principles of urban planning and in managing daily transport requirements. We have expressed our opinion on the European Commission's White Paper on Services of General Interest and are following up the debate and further developments at European level.
- CEMR believes that local elected representatives are in the best position to choose the economic model which best ensures delivery of high quality public transport that meets the citizens' needs. While increased competition may indeed have positive effects, particularly economic, in some cases, we are concerned that such benefits may come at the expense of quality and effective coordination between different transport modes.
- Public transport is an essential element of more sustainable mobility and requires important funding. CEMR is not convinced the market alone can achieve this goal. National governments must guarantee citizens access to good services of general interest at affordable prices. Competition can be

introduced in areas where it brings benefits but it should be regulated. The EU should provide a general regulatory framework but it must not force national, regional and local authorities to liberalise and privatise.

- Public Private Partnerships become more and more popular to finance infrastructure projects at local and regional level. The European Commission's upcoming Communication on institutionalised PPPs and its expected legislative proposal on concessions need to be taken into account in the future development in order to clarify its applicability to the circumstances of local and regional authorities.

Funding

- Thanks to their transport policies, and as public transport organisers, local and regional authorities are essential actors for contributing to shift to more sustainable transport modes. Nevertheless, these policies require funding. Public transport is an essential instrument for economic competitiveness, for the attractiveness of European territories, for the quality of life of citizens, and to fight pollution, particularly in cities, and climate change. Therefore national governments must guarantee important, stable and long term financing for public transport investments at the local, regional and national levels.
- CEMR welcomes the structural funds and loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) available for investments in public transport. Nevertheless, potential project beneficiaries may not be aware of the extent to which of structural funds (ERDF) can be used to transport initiatives outside of "convergence areas": it would be good to better integrate urban transport possibilities into documents such as the regional Operational Programmes and the National Strategic Reference Frameworks. Similarly, many actors at the local level are not aware of EIB initiatives such as JESSICA: information and communication should be improved.
The EU and the EIB could also consider to operate a "modal shift" in the funding and re-direct more funds away from road construction towards rail.
- New funding tools should be explored and promoted. Road pricing schemes can provide new sources of financing for sustainable modes of transport while reflecting the costs to the environment of road use.

Modal shift

- CEMR calls on the European Commission to renew its efforts to better balance the modal split of the transport of passengers and goods in the EU. CEMR is disappointed that the revision of the White Paper on transport, in 2006, has weakened this essential objective of the original 2001 White Paper. More than ever, in light of growing pollution problems and threat to the climate, more sustainable modes of transport need to be developed and supported. In particular, new tools for the internalization of external costs should be developed, whereas investments in public

transport must increase. Actions directed at citizens and businesses should also aim to alter lifestyles so that the European society becomes less reliant on car and road use, particularly in cities (individual cars are often necessary in rural areas).

CEMR recommends:

- o A clear regulatory framework on the financing and organisation of local and regional public transport that respects the principles of subsidiarity and local self-government.
- o A new impetus and new measures to improve the share of more sustainable forms of transport in the modal split, notably through measures to promote cleaner transport, public transport and non-motorised modes and limit the use of car use (particularly in urban areas).
- o The EU should promote road pricing schemes with a clear earmarking of the revenue to public transport and sustainable modes. There must not be any obligation put on local authorities to introduce such schemes. However, the EU should organise the exchange of best practice on congestion charging and conduct further studies on a wider transport infrastructure system. The European Commission can also consider revising the Eurovignette directive by introducing an urban dimension to it (possibility of toll “mark-up” on motorways that cross urban areas) as well as an obligation to earmark the revenue from the tolls (or a large part of it) to public transport .
- o New EU measures for the development of biofuels and alternative fuel vehicles.
- o Strong binding emission norms for vehicles.
- o Strong EU standardisation of urban transport equipment (vehicles, intelligent transport systems, ticket machines, road pricing systems, low emission zones systems etc.).
- o The EU can prioritise the exchange of information and best practice on current key issues (or issues for which little exchange has taken place) : inter-modality, intelligent transport, integrated ticketing and pricing, road pricing, barriers against increased use of public transport, low emission zones, urban sprawl, demographic change, transport and climate change, urban freight logistics, behaviour etc.
