

Paris, 01st February 2010

SA/2010-006

Excmo. Sr. José Blanco Lopez
Ministro de Fomento
Paseo de la Castellana 67
E-28046 Madrid
Spain

Subject: Urban Transport in the European Transport Policy.

Your Excellency,

Spain holds for the first semester of 2010, the Presidency of the European Union. Among the important topics on the agenda there is the European Transport Policy which frames also the public transport activities in urban areas.

EMTA (European Metropolitan Transport Authorities association) is the association that brings together the authorities responsible for public transport in the largest European cities among which several Consorcios de Transportes, namely those of the cities of Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, Sevilla, Bilbao and Bahia de Cadiz.

EMTA promotes the exchange of information and good practice in the field of public transport organization, planning and funding. It also regularly advocates the concerns of public transport authorities towards the European institutions and is developing a fruitful collaboration with the European Commission DG-TREN especially about the Action Plan on Urban Mobility.

32 members across 17 European countries are gathered in EMTA, their public transport networks serve more than 90 million European citizens, and a partner institution in Canada (Montreal). The president of EMTA is Hans-Werner Franz CEO of VBB Berlin-Brandenburg, CRTM transport authority of Madrid Region and STIF transport authority of Ile de France are vice-presidents¹.

EMTA Board members met on 14 January 2010 in Brussels and had the pleasure to hear Mr Jesus Izarzugaza from the Spanish Government permanent representation in Brussels who displayed the Presidency agenda related to transport matters. EMTA would like to take the opportunity to share some concerns.

About the European Transport Policy, the European Commission put forward six causal factors likely to impact transport evolution scenarios, and thus appropriate policies:

¹ For more information please visit www.emta.com.

ageing, migration, environmental sustainability, fossil fuel scarcity, urbanisation, and globalisation (CEC, 2009b).

Of those six factors, three are clearly priorities for EMTA: environmental sustainability, urbanisation and ageing.

Concerning environmental sustainability, it is necessary to keep in mind that the modal split for passenger transport has been and still remain largely dominated by the private car in European countries. It accounted for 73% of all trips in 2008 while the bus travel had the second place in all but five European countries with a share of 8%, and rail, trams and metro have a 7% share².

A sustainable future calls for a long term vision for Urban Mobility and a pro-active strategy. The document "Towards an integrated, technology led and user friendly system"³ points towards a better integration of the different modes of transport as a way to improve the overall efficiency, and as an absolute priority in the European Transport Policy. The TEN-T network strategy and the urban transport [future] strategy are in fact two aspects of the same subject, that is to say territorial mobility and accessing to further places on the national ground or abroad. Urban mobility can be considered either as the last part of the chain or the first one but should certainly not be neglected. Both strategies should be linked for a better efficiency of the whole.

Urban planning too often had lead to urban sprawl thus constantly challenging public transport planning.

The way ahead is a better coordination of both planning activities and the implementation of Sustainable Mobility Plans with a view to ensure that mobility needs are met while ensuring energy efficiency, economic growth and social inclusion. Such plans in turn, call for strong and capable Transport Authorities at metropolitan scale with enlarged scopes to all aspects of urban mobility.

As of the ageing factor, the challenge already there will dramatically increase in the coming decades.

Europe is facing tremendous demographic shifts and as the "car generation" is growing old, older people are increasingly using their private car instead of environmentally sustainable modes of urban transport – with massive impacts on energy efficiency. Meeting the needs of older people is also an aspect of the focus European Commission puts on the "users" of passenger transport, much related to the Passenger Rights future regulation.

A European project funded through the European Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) called AENEAS, of which EMTA is partner, following the concept of the "multi-modal senior traveller", explores concrete measures in the field of mobility management, travel training and communication with a view to select good practice and draw recommendations. This initiative hopefully will, as a first step, raise awareness to this specific topic, but more efforts and commitment will be needed.

² Source : EEA Transport at a cross road Term 3/2009

³ Communication on the Future of Transport adopted by the Commission on 17 June 2009

These are the main topics where EMTA is currently concentrating its activity. However it has to be stressed that the above policy measures to support a sustainable mobility in metropolitan areas call in turn for a sustainable funding of the services of transport and of the infrastructure. Unfortunately on this particular point the European Union Transport Policy remains unclear for the future.

On behalf of EMTA I wish to the Spanish Presidency great success in progressing the European Transport Policy in the first semester of 2010.

I thank you, Excellency, for the consideration you will give to this letter. The Secretary General of EMTA Mrs Sabine Avril remains at your disposal, should you wish any further information.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hans-Werner Franz". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Hans-Werner Franz
President of EMTA