

**Position of the association of European Metropolitan Transport Authorities  
(EMTA) on the mid-term review of White Paper of the European Commission  
on the future of the European transport policy**

December 2005

## **Introduction**

The association of European Metropolitan Transport Authorities (EMTA) brings together 33 public authorities in charge of the public transport networks of the European largest cities. These authorities plan, co-ordinate, fund and improve constantly the quality of public transport systems serving more than 85 million European citizens.

The Members of EMTA greeted in 2001 the release by the European Commission of the White Paper on the European transport policy by 2010, since **they all agreed that there was an urgent need to change the patterns of mobility in Europe**. However, they stressed that **this White Paper was lacking ambition concerning mobility in the urban areas**, where live more than three quarters of the European population, on the one hand, and that the European institutions should move fast to implement the measures necessary to foster a sustainable urban mobility, on the other hand.

The mid-term review of the white paper represents an opportunity to update the analysis of the situation, to assess the impact of decisions taken and to propose orientations for EU policy.

### **2001 – 2005: ongoing trends and innovative policies**

During the recent period, we witnessed on-going trends in the field of urban mobility:

- The urbanisation rate, which is above 75% in Europe, is still increasing, bringing more and more people living in cities.
- The size of households keeps on declining regularly: 2.6 people per household in 1990, 2.2 forecast in 2010. This exerts a growing pressure on housing demand and housing costs.
- As a consequence or because of a lack of measures to face this phenomenon, urban sprawling continued its expansion, decreasing the average density of cities and increasing the mobility demand in terms of distances travelled.

The 2001 white paper statement regarding urban areas is still shared by EMTA members: our metropolitan areas are still suffering from congestion, from noise, from air pollution, from degradation of urban space and from road accidents. EMTA member cities welcome the improvement of road fatalities figures reached in the past years but underline that the number of victims stays at an unbearable level: in 2004, 43.500 people were killed in EU 25 and more than 20% of victims were circulating in urban areas.

However, during this period, a wide range of new initiatives have been taken by political decision makers acknowledging the growing concern about urban mobility:

- The congestion charging scheme introduced in London led to an immediate and sustainable decrease of traffic levels and boosted the patronage of public transport, especially bus services. This charging policy will be experimented in Stockholm and in Vilnius in 2006
- The new approach of road space allocation in Paris, providing more room for public transport, pedestrians and cycles has led to a 3% annual reduction of car traffic in the whole city.
- In Madrid, a strong investment policy has been undertaken, progressively positioning the city as Europe's best in class for the length of the metro network. Above ground, motorway lanes have been dedicated to buses, coaches and high occupancy vehicles in combination with an excellent integration of these corridors in the main interchange stations. Offering an easier access to the city for people who smartly use a scarce road space is a positive signal in terms of urban mobility management and increase, at low cost, the capacity of road networks.

The concern about urban mobility is growing in all European cities with a rising awareness of citizen and of political decision makers leading to large action programs, despite strong impediments coming from scarce funding resources, reluctance to change mobility habits, complex institutional frameworks or lack of political willingness.

However new challenges are appearing, setting a higher pressure on urban mobility and calling for further actions to be undertaken.

### **New challenges for the future**

Urban sprawling can be generated by people who settle away from urbanised areas because of a lack of housing offer at a reasonable price in territories well served by transport infrastructure. In this case the expenses avoided in the housing could be paid twice in transport expenses and the financial situation of these households is worsening. The overall price paid by the society to fulfil their mobility needs can be higher than for a policy aiming at helping them living in an area better served with urban facilities.

Urban sprawling will also raise the issue of mobility needs of a growing older population. The baby boomers will soon reach the age of 60 and will increasingly retire in the forthcoming years. Their residence location will probably be chosen regardless of the working areas. In very low density areas, where mobility by car is economically more relevant, public transport could encounter growing expectations even from people who can afford car mobility because of their growing difficulties to drive cars.

Urban sprawling has also negative impacts on the employment and on access to jobs. Companies who decided to settle away from urbanised areas and from public transport infrastructures have benefited from a low land price and low congestion levels which meant an easy road access. However, it also meant a transfer of these costs to their employees who have to spend higher travel expenses. By the time, as urban sprawling goes on, these workplaces are hit by congestion and without public transport services, their accessibility becomes more and more difficult. It becomes harder to find people accepting too long travel times and too high travel expenses, in a context of a rising price of fuel.

The oil crisis is reinforcing the need to have energy efficient urban areas i.e. dense cities well served by public transport. In these cities, the share of trips using public transport is higher and the distances travelled are lower. The energy consumption per inhabitant in areas where density (population + jobs /hectare) is above 100 is four times less than in areas whose density is below 25!

Lastly, urban mobility is a sector where huge improvements can be done regarding the challenge of the climate change. In this battle EU has a key role to play in the implementation of Kyoto Protocol and in actions to undertake after 2012: the transport sector represented 24% % of EU emissions in 2001 and within this sector, road transport accounted for 84%. Public transport with its large proportion of electric energy supply has lower emission rates than fossil mobility. Moreover it consumes 2.2 times less energy than private car per passenger.km. Public transport and generally speaking a cleaner urban mobility is then a key mean of reducing greenhouse gases emission in urban areas.

### **Orientations for white paper mid-term review**

➤ *The importance of subsidiarity is crucial for local authorities but the involvement of European Union is essential to a better mobility management*

EMTA comments and remarks about 2001 white paper are still valid: the public transport authorities of the European metropolitan areas regret that urban transport is not given due consideration in the White Paper, which is illustrated by the fact that it only received 4 pages in the 123-page White Paper. Even though the Commission is right to advocate the principle of

subsidiarity and to say that the “responsibility for urban transport lies mainly with the national and local authorities”, the fact that 75% of the European Population now lives in urban areas should place urban mobility at the core of all European transport policies.

Initiatives which have been taken in the last years have been helped by dissemination of knowledge and exchanges of best practices at European level but urban mobility has a too large impact on our societies to be almost absent from a general document EU Transport policy even if the urban thematic strategy will probably provide a set of guidelines.

Europe has to show that there is a way of combining economic dynamism, social justice, quality of life and a protected environment by setting ambitious objectives and helping monitoring the achievements.

➤ ***Setting ambitious objectives at European level will help political decision makers to undertake ambitious policies with the commitment of local population and with the support of an international platform of experiences***

EMTA transport authorities think that each level of public authorities has a role to play to achieve a sustainable mobility, and the European Union in the first place.

Even though the European Commission cannot replace the local authorities, the White Paper could set general targets such as displaying some objectives of reduction of the use of private car in the European cities.

Even if political decision makers are becoming more and more aware of the necessity to reverse the current trends, they can easily be afraid of taking traffic reductions measures or to turn policy investments and incentives toward cleaner modes of transport, not because of the reluctance of the population but rather because of structured oppositions that are unfortunately better heard by decision makers. Analysing this decision process could help wiser public choices in term of mobility management.

➤ ***Financial contribution is expected for research and for investment projects for new transport systems***

The European Union already invests quite a lot of money in its research programmes devoted to transport. This effort should go on and its results widely circulated.

**The European Union should also devote more money to the funding of new transport systems in the European cities.** Funding of operations has to stay at a local level, with some possible contributions of national levels but EU funding of urban projects can represent a strong incentive to undertake ambitious development programs and to accelerate some projects that often stumble on financial issues.

European subsidies currently concern nearly exclusively cross-border transport projects, which are useful for the improvement of communications between European countries. Moreover, better connections between cities are not profitable if connections within cities are not at a comparable level. Moreover, the number of people impacted in their daily lives is far more important for urban projects than for cross-borders projects.

➤ ***A European harmonisation is strongly expected in the following fields :***

- the **taxation of fuels**, with clear incentives for the use of alternative ones,
- the **technical standards** of public transport systems, so as to set minimum levels of quality of service (for example in terms of accessibility to people with reduced mobility)

- the **rules concerning the use of private car** making possible a co-ordination of car mobility management at a local level : parking management, control and fines policy, traffic management

➤ *European level should define and implement guidelines for a fairer infrastructure charging system between the different transport modes.*

European legal framework should make possible infrastructure charging schemes at local level, with respect for the principle of subsidiarity.

The European regulations could state that the money collected should be devoted to the funding of public transport systems, or of measures aiming at reducing private car demand.

➤ *The definition of strict rules concerning the necessary co-ordination between land use and transport policies.*

The European concept of urbanity is based on cities of a certain density very well served by public transport systems. **The attempts to control and influence the patterns of urban mobility will achieve nothing if it is still possible to develop new urban areas without efficient public transport.** The preservation of rural areas from uncontrolled urbanisation should go together with better connections between town and transport planning in the built areas.

European framework should provide the opportunity for local authorities to implement co-ordinated land use and transport policies with appropriate tools, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.

### **Conclusion**

Even if urban issues are expected to be addressed in the forthcoming urban strategy, challenges raised by mobility in our cities have to be clearly stated in the EU Transport Policy.

The transport authorities of the European metropolitan areas would expect a document dealing with the future of EU transport policy better taking into account urban transport. Urban mobility could be for instance addressed through the fields of research, co-ordination of transport policies within urban transport (parking/traffic management/public transport) and with land use policies in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, promotion of best practices or funding of investments, etc.

The challenge is very strong: urban mobility will impact the daily life of 85% of European dwellers and could have tremendous consequences on the future of our planet.

Paris, 28 December 2005

List of public transport authorities belonging to the association of European Metropolitan Transport Authorities (EMTA)

AMSTERDAM	Regionaal Orgaan Amsterdam (ROA)
BARCELONE	Autoritat del Transport Metropolità (ATM)
BERLIN	Verkehrsverbund Berlin Brandenburg (VBB)
BILBAO	Consortio de Transportes de Bizkaia (CTB)
BIRMINGHAM	West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority (CENTRO)
BRUSSELS	Ministère de la Région Bruxelles Capitale
CADIZ	Consortio Metropolitano de Transportes de la Bahia de Cadiz
DUBLIN	Dublin Transportation Office (DTO)
FRANKFURT-RHEIN-MAIN	Rhein-Main Verkehrsverbund (RMV)
GENEVA	Office des Transports et de la Circulation (OTC)
HELSINKI	Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council (YTV)
LISBON	Camara Municipal
LONDON	Transport for London (TfL)
LYON	SYndicat mixte des Transports pour le Rhone et l'Agglomération Lyonnaise (SYTRAL)
MADRID	Consortio Regional de Transportes de Madrid (CRTM)
MANCHESTER	Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE)
MILAN	Comune di Milano - Assessorato ai Trasporti e Mobilità
OSLO	Oslo Sporveier (OS)
PARIS	Syndicat des Transports d'Ile de France (STIF)
PRAGUE	Prague Transit Authority (ROPID)
ROME	Comune di Roma - Assessorato ai Trasporti
SEVILLE	Consortio de Transportes del Area de Sevilla
SHEFFIELD	South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYLTE)
STOCKHOLM	AB Storstockholms Lokaltrafik (SL)
TURIN	Agenzia per la Mobilità Metropolitana
VALENCE	Entidad Publica de Transporte Metropolitano (eTM)
WARSAW	Zarząd Transportu Miejskiego (ZTM)
VIENNA	Verkehrsverbund Ost Region (VOR)
VILNIUS	Susisiekimo Paslaugos
ZURICH	Zürcher Verkehrsverbund (ZVV)
HAMBOURG	Hamburger Verkehrsverbund (HVV)
STUTTGART	Verband Region Stuttgart (VRS)
Associazione delle Città Italiane per la Mobilità Sostenibile	