



Mobility for Prosperity in Europe

Contribution to the public consultation on a sustainable future for transport¹

Mobility is an important facilitator of social and economic welfare. It is an important basic right to be protected and further enhanced.

Future European transport policy should therefore:

- put transport users' needs at the forefront,
- be part of a holistic approach,
- be based on relevant facts and thorough analysis,
- develop effective co-modality rather than force unsuitable modal shift,
- foster investment into transport infrastructure, the basis for future welfare,
- encourage intelligent innovation, making transport more efficient and sustainable,
- enhance the benefits of transport rather than increase the burden on users,
- focus on meeting the demand for mobility,
- make sure public money is efficiently used.

1. Put users' needs at the forefront

All users should benefit from a transport system whose design and management corresponds to their needs. Policies that do not take those needs into account and so try to side-pass the economic and social reality are bound to fail.

Against the backdrop of increasing global and regional challenges, the European Commission, when looking into the future of transport, needs to adjust the EU transport policy toolbox with view to reflect the evolving and in many ways more diverse way of life of its citizens and the competitive intra-EU and global economic environment.

Proposed action:

- *Let policy development be guided the users' mobility needs.*
- *Include powered two-wheelers, busses and coaches in the policy. Moreover address tourism as a major trigger for mobility.*

2. Be part of a holistic approach

Transport is often accused to be the principle cause of problems, environmental damages and loss of quality of life. Rather than integrating mobility into the equation of a successful overall policy, transport is singled out as the source of evil while political responses too often tend to focus on adding further burdens and restrictions. Instead of bringing a real improvement it adversely affects the social and economic welfare as well as long-term competitiveness.

Proposed action:

- *Take into account effects on mobility within each policy area.*

¹ This contribution was jointly prepared by Brussels-based stakeholder organisations active in the transport sector within the association *Mobility for Prosperity in Europe* which is multimodal in its approach, privileging the use of the most efficient and welfare-creating modes at all times. As such, it does not necessarily reflect in full their own positions and standpoints on the individual issues raised in the paper.

3. Be based on relevant facts and thorough analysis

Appropriate, comparable, reliable and timely statistics on the mobility of passengers and goods at EU level is a prerequisite for good transport policy. Work should start immediately to develop the necessary methodology and willingness to collect these essential figures and make them available to policy makers.

Proposed action:

- Match data collected on passenger and freight transport movements with the complex matrix of national, international, sectoral and load-type segments and markets. They should reflect and take into account cross-elasticities that exist between these different market segments.
- Collect comparable and consistent EU-wide data on purpose, origin and destination, goods' weight and value by mode, in passenger and freight transport.
- Develop European definitions for congestion and collect related data.

4. Develop effective co-modality rather than force unsuitable modal shift

Future policy must build on the new constructive political attitude of EU policy-makers towards all modes of transport. It must preserve and enhance the advantages of each mode while working at a better integration to the benefit of the users. In a period of dramatic socio-economic repercussions due to the current global financial and economic crisis, transport policy should not fall again into the trap of artificially forced and inefficient modal shift policies, but instead to reason in terms of true co-modality and optimisation of each mode of transport. The free movement of people and goods is a basic component of the single area which the European Union has been building since its inception.

A general Commission's perception seems to be that all modes of transport compete with each other. The fact is that some modes are in competition for transport in specific situations, but in general modes are complementary. One way of identifying which modes are in competition and which are complementary is to look at the value of the delivered service.

A modal shift policy is suitable to pursue environmental goals in specific cases, but it is neither possible nor suitable in the majority of the traffic flows. It is not acceptable to base policy on the assumption that some modes of transport are, by definition, more environmental friendly than others.

With specific regard to passenger transport, individual and collective transport offer different services. They therefore fulfil different needs and are not, as is often assumed, communicating vessels. The efforts need therefore to be focussed on enhancing the sustainability of individual transport. Public transport plays without any doubt a crucial supportive role, mainly on mainstream routes. Its role can be enhanced if its service is further adapted to the needs of its users (comfort, flexibility, modal integration, etc.). A forced modal shift policy based on traffic restrictions and increased costs for individual transport will lead to a high loss of welfare without the expected benefits for mobility and quality of life.

Proposed action:

- Investigate the various market obstacles preventing public transport to become truly competitive, promote full and open access to operators, foster the separation of infrastructure and press for competition in the sector. At the same time the European Commission should address infringements of the rules or illegal practices that hinder competition.

- Strengthen the rights of passengers using public transport in intra-European travels and ensure that these rights are effectively respected without long judicial procedure.

5. Foster investment into transport infrastructure, the basis for future welfare

A good infrastructure is a pre-condition for sustainable mobility by ensuring smooth traffic flow (limiting congestion and its negative effects on the environment) and by guaranteeing a high level of safety. In particular with regard to the current crisis improving the transport infrastructure will set the best conditions for future economic strength and competitiveness and bring multiple immediate benefits for employment and trade.

While road transport has occupied the central role in transport, too much of the limited TEN budgets are politically channelled towards non-road infrastructure. The task of filling in the missing links and removing bottlenecks in the EU road network as well as carrying out much need maintenance deserves a much greater degree of financial and political support from the European Union, proportionate to the role of road transport and its importance in ensuring the competitiveness of the European economy.

Proposed action:

- *Prioritise TEN-T funding following a rigorous cost/benefit analysis.*
- *Condition TEN-T spending to the delivery of safe infrastructure.*

6. Encourage intelligent innovation, making transport more efficient and sustainable

ICT-based transport applications can help increasing the efficiency and sustainability of transport and the use of limited infrastructure, reduce congestion and improve transport safety and security. A large number of ICT-based transport applications have been successfully developed and demonstrated in collaborative research projects.

Proposed action:

- *Confirm the proper functioning of the technologies through field tests and address liability issues.*
- *Deploy the most market-ripe technologies on a large scale while making sure that user needs are taken into account.*

7. Enhance the benefits of transport rather than increase the burden on users

The immense progress made during the last couple of decades which in turn has brought about huge environmental, social and economic benefits across the society needs to be better recognised. Further sustainable progress should be encouraged. Artificially increasing the costs of transport does not necessarily make it greener or more efficient, it will just make it more expensive. Implementing charging schemes on the basis of weak methodology of assessing negative externalities while leaving the positive externalities out of scope will damage the European welfare on the long term.

Finding a balance, between the need to pursue socio-economic objectives of growth and development and the need to further reduce the negative effects that transport causes to the society, will remain the key challenge in the quest for a more sustainable mobility over the coming years. Sustainability has three pillars: social, economic and environmental. All of these pillars are of equal importance and they all need to be taken into account when assessing the sustainability of the policy measures.

An important aspect of sustainable mobility is safety. With almost forty thousand citizens dying each year on Europe's roads the European Union needs to pursue a particularly ambitious road safety policy.

Proposed action:

- Encourage Member States to reinvest collected revenues from taxes and charges in developing a sustainable transport system as well as mitigating nuisances at their source, rather than to increase the financial burden on users.
- Prepare the path towards a cleaner and more efficient mobility, in particular by promoting the development of alternative propulsion systems and fuels and a fuel efficient driving style and implementing an environment friendly taxation.
- Pursue an ambitious road safety policy, in particular by targeting high risk groups such as young drivers and vulnerable road users, raising the awareness for safety amongst all road users and reinforcing traffic safety education.

8. Focus on meeting the demand for mobility

Sustainable and efficient mobility is and will continue to be a major contributor to the social and economic wealth of the European Union and a key element in its future. For decades, Europe's prosperity has grown, with the indispensable support of a more and more performing transport system, placing Europe amongst the most vivid centres of social and economic activity.

The EU can only live up to its ambitious Lisbon agenda's economic, social and environmental objectives, including at international level, with a modern and pragmatic transport policy framework.

Proposed action:

- *Focus efforts on making transport more sustainable, including economic, social and environmental aspects.*
- *Enable each transport mode to develop its inherent strengths for the benefit of all users and society as a whole.*

9. Make sure public money is efficiently used

Considering the strong involvement of public authorities in the management of the transport infrastructure and public transport services the allocation of public funds must become more efficient, i.e. spent on the most important transport means in terms of traffic and avoiding any waste of money on inefficient services and prestige projects.

A transport system, enabling high quality mobility at affordable costs, guided by the needs of all, taking into account social, economic and environmental aspects in a balanced way, will serve best the society. A transport system guided by ideological principles jeopardises the welfare of all.

Proposed action:

- *Refocus the TEN-T priorities and increase the efficiency of public transport.*

Mobility for Prosperity in Europe – 30-09-2009