

OPEN CONSULTATION ON NEW URBAN MOBILITY INITIATIVE

ASECAP CONTRIBUTION

The European Commission has launched an online open consultation on the new EU Urban Mobility framework. More specifically, the consultation should provide feedback as to how the EU urban areas can contribute to reducing transport greenhouse emissions and to other objectives of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy including its milestone to have 100 European cities carbon-neutral by 2030.

ASECAP members support EU policy to make urban mobility carbon free and welcome the initiative. ASECAP would like to point out some issues and proposes some recommendations.

- The climate and environmental emergency as well as the health and economic crises have put transport at the heart of the European agenda. The Green Deal and the recent Strategy for sustainable and smart mobility are the most obvious illustrations.
- The size of European cities is growing and the population is concentrated in urban and periurban areas. Time for commuting, congestion, air pollution and noise are increasing in our cities. ASECAP considers that one of the most important rights is the freedom to move, whose enjoyment must be effective. In order to guarantee for this right to be fully implemented, the urban mobility initiative has to address the situation of European citizens forced to live outside cities because of housing price and having to daily commute to the city for professional, administrative, health or study reasons
- Capacity of road infrastructure, especially in urban area, is unfortunately limited and therefore not suited to guarantee the effective enjoyment of the freedom to move.

To face those challenges, toll road infrastructure operators propose to invest to create new urban mobility frameworks and contribute to decarbonisation of road transport, in order to reach the target of carbon-free emission by 2050. Several actions should be considered by the urban initiative, in order to achieve this objective:

- optimising the entire transport system with actions aimed at improving transport sector carbon footprint and urban mobility,
- investing in road infrastructure to reduce externalities (congestion, emission savings and removing “barrier effect” of surface street by moving upper car traffic underground on urban tunnels)
- Constructing by-passes to avoid long trip drivers to cross the city,
- developing robust alternative fuel network both for car and public transport (electrical fast charging stations, H2-infrastructure for buses and coaches) in order to deploy faster carbon free vehicles (including autonomous vehicle),
- developing solutions for a better use of the infrastructure with managed lanes to access the cities, dedicated lanes for mass public transport, (carpooling, multimodal hubs,...) where needs are in demand and the least satisfied, especially in important metropolitan area with large cities,
- supporting multimodal approaches and address issues of mobility by unfolding new services,
- Equip the structuring road network so as to transform it into an infrastructure able to dialog with vehicles and influence CO2 emission,

Sustainable financing

It will be necessary to adapt to those new needs and to develop what will be required to make new services available and working properly and financially sustainable.

- We believe that the source of funding should be sustainable in time, and as such it should be encouraged (not to burden future generations with debt repayments) and ideally come from road users, that benefit from the mobility infrastructure.
- Motorway operators have always been innovative companies, always looking ahead to find new ways, new techniques and new systems to improve the services provided to our customers. All the necessary investments are made by the private companies without any recourse to public budgets thanks to the concession system. They are financed thanks to user/pay principle. The concession system is a powerful and flexible tool that serves mobility and land-use planning for public utility.
- Tolling/charging is not only a mechanism to finance the needed investments on road infrastructure (to build, enlarge and make resilient the EU road network and adapt it to the digitalisation and green evolutions) but it is also a key mechanism to manage the traffic demand, boosting the transition to cleaner, safer, connected and automated vehicles and to place the right incentives to our mobility.
- Tolling can be a very good solution to low emission zones and could be applied in urban areas in order to reduce CO₂ emissions in the cities
- Urban Road pricing should be an option that policymakers should take into account which will provide sustainable financing resources to develop robust carbon free urban mobility solutions,
- Investors can act in long-term liaison with administrations, to ensure the pursuit of sustainable goals through long term public-private partnerships. The cooperation between investors and the administration should be based on a transparent mechanism, with an entity bearing and managing most of the risks, having an economic incentive to ensure that infrastructure is resilient. This sustainable mechanism can be transferred to future generations in the same or better conditions. It has already been tested by concession public or private models and should be encouraged in compliance with the regulation.

About ASECAP:

ASECAP is the European Association of Operators of Toll Road Infrastructures across 20 member countries representing 135 companies employing more than 50.000 direct jobs and 200.000 indirect jobs. They operate, maintain, manage a network of more than 86.000 km with a long-term vision that ensures highest quality standards to make the road infrastructure safest thank to the user/payer principle providing sustainable financing. ASECAP members are shouldering their responsibility as mobility providers linking inter-urban and metropolitan areas, playing a major role by moving people for their daily trips to go to work, school, hospital....

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