



Committee of the Regions

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**WORKING DOCUMENT
of the
Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy**

ACTION PLAN ON URBAN MOBILITY

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This document will be discussed at the meeting of the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy to be held from **11 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. on 20 November 2009.**

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Rapporteur

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Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Action Plan on Urban Mobility
COM(2009) 490 final

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I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. Background

The Action Plan on Urban Mobility adopted by the Committee of the Regions¹ in April 2009 in response to the European Parliament's own initiative report on an Action Plan on Urban Mobility² included the following statements:-

* welcomes the numerous initiatives which have emerged at EU level on urban policy and the EU funding which has already supported a range of urban initiatives, and, therefore, believes it necessary to move beyond the Green Paper and further broaden the political scope of urban mobility policy;

* underlines the importance of ensuring that adequate funding mechanisms are in place, along with mechanisms to ensure effective partnership working. The CoR therefore advocates a model whereby Urban Mobility Plans are implemented via sustainable long-term public-public/public-private agreements or Mobility Agreements;

* asks that the Commission establish a financing instrument that would encourage urban and metropolitan areas to set up Mobility Plans. This financial instrument should be made available to regions and urban areas directly, without depending upon Member State approval. Urban Mobility Plans should be the responsibility of the cities themselves;

* asks that the European Commission also add value to the process by funding incentives, award schemes and exchange of best practice. The CoR's opinion on the Green Paper suggested the equivalent of an EU-wide "Blue Flag Scheme" to be awarded on the basis of specific indicators to urban areas with low levels of pollution and congestion.

On 30 September 2009, the Commission adopted an Action Plan on Urban Mobility³ which proposes twenty measures to encourage and help local, regional and national authorities in achieving their goals for sustainable urban mobility. With the Action Plan, the European Commission presents for the first time a comprehensive support package in the field of urban mobility.

Local, regional and national authorities are free to use this support, and the tools that will be offered. By doing so, the European Commission believes that they will be better equipped to address the challenge of sustainable urban mobility, which will facilitate their policy making. In addition, Europe's citizens and companies will benefit from this on a daily basis.

1 CdR 417/2008.

2 INI/2008/2217.

3 COM(2009) 490.

The actions are being launched over the four years following the Action Plan's adoption. The European Commission will conduct a review of the implementation of the Action Plan in the year 2012, and will assess the need for further action.

These measures reflect, for the most part, the views expressed by the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament.

2. **Comments on the European Commission's Action Plan on Urban Mobility**

2.1 *The Economic and Environmental Arguments for an Action Plan*

The European Commission identifies that 72%⁴ of the European population live in urban areas. This figure will rise to 84% by 2050. Also, around 85% of the EU's GDP is generated in cities, urban areas face the challenge of making transport sustainable in competencies (congestion) and environmental (air pollution, noise) terms.

The CoR should acknowledge this situation by advocating that urban areas should, in promoting a competitiveness and growth agenda alongside the climate change agenda, pursue effective and coordinated action that delivers sustainable transport systems and sustainable urban mobility measures. However, since most passenger and freight transport at least starts and ends urban areas and passes through urban areas on its way, we should acknowledge that urban congestion negatively impacts also on inter-urban travel.

2.2 *Roles and Responsibilities*

In the Action Plan, the European Commission acknowledges that urban mobility policies are the primary responsibility of local, regional and national authorities but, correctly, state that decisions adopted at a local level often relate to a framework set by regional, national and EU policy. The European Commission, therefore, adopts the view that much is to be gained by a partnership approach which fully respects the subsidiarity principle and the different competencies and responsibilities of all levels of governance, and proposes short and medium-term practical actions to be launched from now until 2012.

The Committee of the Regions should welcome this statement by the European Commission.

In arriving at this position, the European Commission takes the view that Cohesion Policy and other EU policies need to take account of urban mobility objectives, and that EU policy, legislation and funding has helped develop the urban mobility agenda. Again, the Committee of the Regions – on behalf of local and regional actors – should positively acknowledge this position.

4

United Nations, World Urbanisation Projects : The 2007 Revision.

The Action Plan on Urban Mobility provides an opportunity to set out an EU framework to assist local, regional and national authorities to take action in urban areas where sustainable transport networks need to be developed and new technological solutions introduced, respecting competencies and responsibilities.

2.3 Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

The European Commission's Action Plan sets out 6 themes arising from the consultation on the Green Paper, each of which is worth commenting upon.

2.3.1 Promoting Integrated Policies

Three actions are proposed, perhaps the most important of these being the support to be given to local authorities in developing sustainable urban mobility plans covering freight and passenger transport in urban and peri-urban areas. This action was a key recommendation in the Committee of the Region's Opinion: CdR 417/2008.

However, an interesting addition – worthwhile of support – is the proposal to introduce an urban mobility dimension in the Sustainable Energy Plans to be prepared by cities participating in the Covenant of Mayors⁵, in order to promote an integrated approach linking energy and climate change with sustainable transport and mobility issues.

The European Commission also intends to better identify funding opportunities for taking forward sustainable urban mobility and regional policy, including advice on State Aid and Public Procurement rules.

2.3.2 Focusing on Citizens

There is acknowledgement that passenger rights and availability of information on reliability, safety, etc are necessary to attract the public to the bus, tram, metro and other public transport modes. The Commission intends to identify EU-wide best practices and to put in place a set of voluntary commitments for strengthening passenger rights in public transport.

The European Commission intends to work with public transport operators and others in facilitating the provision of travel information, with the ultimate aim of providing users with a public transport travel portal at an EU level on the internet – as suggested by the Committee of the Regions in CdR 417/2008.

Of major importance is the Commission proposal to launch a study on the operational rules for Green Zones across the EU, which is intended to lead to the exchange of good practice. This issue was given

5

www.eumayors.eu.

significant focus by the Committee of Regions in CdR 417/2008, where the Committee of the Regions supported the introduction of an annual European prize to reward outstanding and transferable transport initiatives, but as part of the equivalent of an EU-wide “Blue Flag Scheme” awarded to areas with low levels of environmental pollution and congestion.

The European Commission appears to have accepted this proposal by suggesting that the existing award scheme would be optimised and a special award introduced to encourage the adoption of urban mobility plans.

2.3.3 Greening Urban Transport

The European Commission believes that action at an EU level can help strengthen markets for new, clean vehicle technologies and alternative fuels. It therefore proposes continued support for research and demonstration projects funded through the Seventh Framework Programme, with specific reference to the European Green Cars Initiative⁶ with its focus on electric vehicles and related infrastructure in urban areas.

2.3.4 Strengthening Funding

A specific recommendation of the previous Committee of the Regions Opinion on an Action Plan for Urban Mobility was the support for European funding and co-financing of urban transport projects being conditional upon the existence of integrated Urban Mobility Plans, further adding to the EU incentivisation of these plans. The Committee of the Regions supported the introduction of European financial instruments within the 2014-2020 Financial Perspective enabling co-financing of Urban Mobility Plans, contingent upon the existence of public-public/public-private Urban Mobility Agreements that draw in funds from the private sector, local, regional and national funding programmes.

The view is endorsed by the European Commission as it has recognised in its Action Plan that EU funding, including EIB instruments, can provide significant incentives and help leverage private funds – so helping local authorities to develop innovative public-private partnership schemes.

Furthermore, the Commission has acknowledged that it should continue to support the CIVITAS initiative beyond the third generation projects started in 2008. The Committee of the Regions may wish to reflect that the time has come to move CIVITAS beyond demonstration projects, and exchange of best practice towards the policy imperative of the adoption of Urban Mobility Plans and their implementation.

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/info/green_cars_initiative_en.html.

2.3.5 Sharing Experience and Knowledge

The European Commission intends to launch a study on how to improve data collection for urban transport and mobility, and to set up a virtual platform to share information, data and statistics, monitor developments and facilitate the exchange of best practices. This action was previously welcomed by the Committee of the Regions.

2.3.6 Optimising Urban Mobility

The European Commission is concerned to facilitate modal shift towards more environmentally friendly modes of transport and efficient freight logistics and, in order to respond to these concerns, intends to organise a conference on urban freight transport in 2010. This initiative should be welcomed. The Committee of the Regions would wish to participate in the conference and should urge a stronger emphasis on the promotion of modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport, crucial to achieving lower-polluted and less-congested urban areas.

The Commission also envisages offering assistance on the application of Intelligent Transport Systems for urban mobility to, for example, look at electronic ticketing and payment, traffic management, travel information, etc and intends to launch a study on the interoperability of ticketing and payment systems, including the use of smart cards.

3. Looking Ahead

The European Commission intends to develop this Action Plan. The Committee of the Region's response should be to actively support the Commission of mobilising local and regional authorities behind the Action Plan.

Are there issues that arose in the Green Paper or through the European Parliament's own initiative opinion? Are there other issues which have been included in the Action Plan which need to be expanded? If so, the Committee of Region's response to the Commission's Action Plan, offers us the opportunity to add in these additional dimensions in the Opinion to be taken through COTER in February.
