

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – DIRECTORATE FOR CONSULTATIVE WORK
COTER Commission and "Networks & Subsidiarity" Unit



QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE ACTION PLAN ON URBAN MOBILITY
COM (2009) 490 final

Submitted for consultation of the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network
by Sir Albert Bore (UK/PSE)

Please complete and submit by **Friday 8 January 2010**. You can upload the completed questionnaires directly on the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network webpage (<http://subsidiarity.cor.europa.eu> – remember to be logged in). Alternatively, you can send them by email to subsidiarity@cor.europa.eu.

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BACKGROUND

The Urban Mobility Action Plan consists of a comprehensive support package aiming to provide local, regional and national authorities with incentives, support and tools to develop a culture of sustainable urban mobility in the EU, which fosters competitiveness, is environmentally friendly and promotes an inclusive and cohesive society. Urban mobility should not be seen in isolation, but should be addressed with the objectives of other community policies (cohesion, environment, growth and jobs) in mind.

The action plan includes short and medium term practical solutions in the form of 20 actions across 6 thematic areas¹. Actions are to be launched until 2012 and will be based on partnership with and voluntary commitment by local, regional and national authorities in cooperation with the European Commission in selected areas. They will be implemented through existing EU programmes and instruments. The European Commission underlines that local, regional and national authorities will be free to make use of the support and tools offered under the action plan and that all actions will be implemented through existing programmes and instruments.

Please complete the questions overleaf:

¹ Promotion of integrated policies, citizens' rights, green urban transport, funding, experience and knowledge sharing, optimisation of urban mobility.

A. Subsidiarity & Proportionality:
1. <i>Given the responsibilities/competences of local and regional authorities in your country, which do you think should be the role of the EU as regards achieving sustainable urban mobility?</i>
<i>If possible, provide reasons for your answer.</i>
There are no regional authorities in Hungary. The EU's role in the field of sustainable mobility should be exactly the same as in other Central and Eastern European countries: cities which are struggling to overcome specific problems in their transport systems (aging vehicles, decrepit infrastructure, the rise of individual transport) should be able to get support for the solutions which are most appropriate to local needs. This means giving priority to renewal of rail-based rolling stock and to renewal and expansion of infrastructure in order to make public transport significantly more competitive. Cities must be encouraged to develop projects that can be rapidly and effectively implemented, and to follow European best practices while adapting them to local conditions. The EU should continue encouraging cities and surrounding areas in developing and implementing integrated transport plans.
2. <i>Do you consider the proposed actions appropriate for achieving the objective of sustainable urban mobility in the EU in a satisfactory manner?</i>
<i>If possible, provide reasons for your answer.</i>
<i>We find the Action Plan too weak. We regret that the modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport, that is to support a shift towards more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking, has not been emphasised at all in the Action Plan. European cities insist on the need to consider modal shift as a key solution for reducing pollution and congestion in urban areas in the future.</i>
<i>The Action Plan should include initiatives for urban areas to achieve significant changes in the modal split. Packages of measures are needed – across a range of areas: from demand management tools and freight logistics to mobility management and road safety. The initiatives must be cross-sectorial and part an integrated long-term framework. European cities would like to participate in the planned working groups to develop such ideas (e.g. road pricing).</i>
<i>Another weakness of the document is the lack of emphasis on public transport, especially on the fixed-track solutions. In the period of car dominated planning, between the 1950s and the 1970s many cities have eliminated their tram lines, replacing these with extended roads which were first occupied by buses and later by cars. The same cities today regret their decisions and spend enormous amounts of money to re-build something which once existed. The Commission guidelines should include statements on the priority of public transport modes and should suggest financing solutions besides new development of such systems also on the improvement of these in cities where they still exist (i.e. Structural Funds means should be available not only for new developments but also for improvements of public transport infrastructure and rolling stock). It is also crucial to create incentives towards city-region cooperation in public transport, based on area-wide transport associations.</i>
<i>Apart from working out integrated sectorial policies, another important factor is abiding these policies</i>

as well as the clarification of the roles of individual participants (ex: organizations responsible for supplying, service providers and units relying on services) and the establishment of regulations concerning their operational standards.

The main objective is to strive for giving the new measures realistic content that can be interpreted and adopted as well as fulfilled by the cities and providers of public utility services.

In order to achieve the above objective its very important to create a single platform in order to make the tasks to be achieved by cities clear. It is also important to provide a uniform interpretation for cities regarding their responsibilities.

B. Links with other EU policies:

3. *Do you consider that the proposed actions would contribute to higher economic, social and territorial cohesion within urban and peri-urban centres?*

The intention is good, but the relevant transport decision makers and operators need to be convinced that they have a real role in local public services, with greater focus on improving the quality of services and renewing vehicle stock and infrastructure, with a view to promoting sustainable urban development. Failing this, the measures may not have a real impact, which would not be a desirable outcome either for the Commission or for cities in the Member States.

4. *Do you consider that the proposed actions would contribute to achieving the EU's energy and climate change objectives?*

The Mobility Plan fails to emphasises stronger public transport and a more favourable modal split, or to identify measures in support of them, and is therefore too weak to achieve real change. In the absence of a stronger EU position, is the attitude of cities which will decide whether these measures really make a positive contribution to achieving the objectives.

5. *Would you support the introduction of an urban mobility dimension in Sustainable Energy Plans to be prepared by cities within the context of the Covenant of Mayors?*

Yes, definitely.

C. Additional action needed:

6. *Do you consider that there are other or additional lines of action relating to urban mobility that have not been proposed by the Action Plan?*

More coordination is needed between stakeholders in urban (regional) transport, together with supervision at EU level. It is not sustainable for transport sectors (e.g. road and urban transport) to be

in a situation where public transport modes are permanently disadvantaged in both financial and physical terms, where there is confusion between the roles of those commissioning and providing services, and where cities deliberately or otherwise let public transport go into decline.

7. *Would you support the establishment of a specific financial instrument encouraging urban and metropolitan areas to set up integrated urban mobility plans?
Should the access to such financial instruments be subject to conditions?*

Yes. Such **comprehensive urban mobility plans** should cover the whole functional urban area. EU guidance on this should help to include in such plans air quality and climate change, collective transport, intelligent transport technology and systems, mobility management and soft modes, noise, responsible car use, road safety and the urban dimension of international accessibility. Another condition should be effective monitoring, following the preparation of comprehensive mobility plans.

8. *Would you support the extension of the scope of the Action Plan by funding incentives and/or an award scheme? The CoR opinion on the Green Paper² 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.*

Yes, definitely – in the absence of specific incentives, the mobility plan will be ineffective and remain merely a guideline document.

9. *What would your priorities for action/implementation be?*

- i. Establishing institutional structures (at national, regional and local levels)
- ii. Development and long-term establishment of financing structures
- iii. Community responsibilities for transport infrastructure and vehicle stock.
- iv. Community rates for services/fares
- v. Long-term interaction between public and individual transport

D. Best practices and experience:

10. *Has your municipality/city or region (or the constituent members of your association) already implemented measures or initiatives helping to achieve sustainable urban mobility in line with the Action Plan (e.g. implementation of urban mobility plans, passenger rights in urban transport, rules and best practice regarding access to green zones, information exchange platforms etc)?*

Please provide a short description of these measures or initiatives.

²

CdR 236/2007 final.

Budapest participates in the Mobility Week movement. The "Budapest Szíve" (Heart of Budapest) programme is currently undergoing and has made considerable progress in calming city centre traffic.

E. Better regulation:

11. *Do you feel that the impact assessment accompanying the Action Plan is comprehensive and takes into account aspects particular to local and regional authorities?*

We did not find the section of the action plan referring to the impact assessment.

12. *Do you feel that the implementation of the Action Plan will result in increased financial or administrative costs for your city, local authority or region?*

In the short term yes, but improved efficiency could enable costs to be recouped, though not in the same area. If the action plan were more specific and provided support for renewal of public transport and decrepit infrastructure, as well as for closer regional cooperation, it would certainly be worthwhile for cities and local councils to take on additional tasks.