

To:

Directorate General for Energy and Transport
Clean Transport and Urban Transport Unit
(DM28 02/64)
200, rue de la Loi
B - 1049 Brussels



UBC Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat
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REF: Union of the Baltic Cities reply to the consultation on the Green Paper on Urban Mobility

1. Process

The Union of the Baltic Cities finds it very important that the forthcoming Action Plan on Urban Mobility is produced in a cross-sectoral way. The broad consultation is a very good starting point. Representatives from other EU bodies responsible for urban planning, environment, social and economic affairs and employment should be involved to be able to fully integrate the action plan on urban mobility with other EU strategies.

Actions

In our view the Action Plan should emphasize the importance of making a comprehensive mobility plan for the whole urban area, not only for a city itself. The plan should be:

- made in a participatory way involving different stakeholders (public, private, NGOs, citizens, etc.);
- long-term plan and encompass long-term and short term measurable targets;
- closely linked with relevant policy processes and regulations on regional, national and EU level;
- approved by the political level locally and/or regionally;
- monitored and evaluated continuously to secure implementation and follow-up;
- serving as the framework of implementing sustainable urban mobility and emphasize the recognition and avoidance of unexpected and perverse effects of measures conducted in the urban area.

Our experiences from coordinating the BUSTRIP project 2005-2007 (BSR Interreg III B) show that cities are very willing and interested to change the unsustainable urban transport patterns in the urban areas but it is difficult for some cities to know where to start and which measures to choose. With a comprehensive plan that builds on extensive data on the current situation the cities have a better opportunity to change the mobility patterns and sprawl of the urban area. The risk for implementation of measures that actually have reverse effect or only solve existing challenges partially has to be avoided.

Actions:

- To prepare and promote a guide for comprehensive mobility plans for urban areas.

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- To offer trainings for city representatives on efficient measure packages for tackling urban mobility challenges.

Reduced need for transport

The Union of the Baltic Cities sees the target of reduced need for transport as a crucial part of sustainable urban mobility development. This aspect should be addressed by involving urban planners into the process of making urban mobility sustainable. Especially the establishment of out-of-town malls and shopping centers and the sprawling residential areas is of big concern in both new and old EU member states.

Actions:

- To provide guidance on compact cities and planning for reduced need for transport
- To encourage member countries to reduce the tax benefits for long work trips by car.
- To support congestion charging, parking management and restrictive measures.

Public Transport

In general there is a need to raise the profile of public transport in Europe, but especially in the new member states. In many cities in new member states a very well functioning and highly used public transport system exists, but it is also in many cities under growing pressure of increasing private car use.

Actions:

- Guides and funding for upgrading existing public transport.
- European wide awareness raising campaigns on public transport.
- Support to the new member states on how to keep and develop urban public transport systems.

Clean Vehicles

Promote clean vehicles through setting standards and by showing a good example.

Actions:

- Create a EU27 clean vehicle standard for all public transport vehicles and support green procurement of clean vehicles.
- Act for local production of fuel especially from waste.
- Procure clean vehicles for the commission and other EU bodies.

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Strategic Impact Assessment

Usage of existing directives to support sustainable urban mobility is one important action.

Action:

- To assess how the SIA could be used as a strategic instrument in urban mobility planning and implementation.

Funding

Some cities especially from new member states feel that the threshold for especially leading but also some times being involved in European funded projects are too high. A support function for implementing EU funded projects on national/regional level could be established.

Actions:

- To reduce the focus of funding for renewable fuels and energy efficiency for example CIVITAS and STEER, and put more emphasis on public transport in general, sustainable urban transport planning, reducing the need for transport, biking, walking and mobility management.
- Make climate compensation eligible.
- Make a comprehensive transport plan for the urban area an evaluation criteria or eligibility criteria for some funding instruments.

Monitoring

There is a knowledge gap in cities regarding the urban mobility challenges. Some cities lack even the basic figures like modal split and number of accidents in the urban area.

Action:

- To establish a European set of mobility indicators and tools and guidance on how to collect the data should be given. The data should be monitored on European level.

Information and Awareness raising

Technical solutions and cleaner vehicles will not solve the mobility problems of our European cities. There is a need for a change of habits among European citizens. Many steps can be taken by making car driving harder and more expensive and enhance the other modes but there is also a great need for information and awareness raising. There is a need for information of the impact on the environment and society of different mobility choices.

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There is also a lack of information on how to manage the alternative choices, bike maps, public transport route maps, real time information, internet support, transparent tickets etc. Not only on the citizen level, but there is a lack of understanding also among the planners and decision makers in the cities. They have to know the consequences of their decisions and give clear signals to the citizens.

Actions:

- Extend the Energy week to Energy and Transport week with a designated day for urban mobility.
- Use the CIVITAS cities as a “consultancy” network for other cities for Peer Review, Study Visits, consultancies and trainings.
- Establish a network similar to Energy Offices of Mobility Offices around Europe.
- European wide commercials for raising awareness on the impact of the citizens’ mobility choices.
- Target cities that are weak and not taking part in EU funded projects or policy processes either with training or campaigns.

Yours sincerely on behalf of the Union of the Baltic Cities

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Anna Granberg".

Anna Granberg
Project Team leader
Union of the Baltic Cities, Commission on Environment