



Climate Alliance

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Climate Alliance Statement: The Urban Dimension of the EU Transport Policy

Climate Alliance welcomes the invitation of the European Commission to the public and all stakeholders to provide proposals on how best to contribute with targeted EU-level action to high-quality and sustainable urban mobility. For already some years now, the EU has recognised the central role of the local level in contributing to more sustainable transport patterns in Europe, being it in the Green Paper "Towards a New Culture for Urban Mobility" (2007), the Action Plan on Urban Mobility (2009) or the latest White Paper "Towards a single European Transport Area" (2011).

Climate Alliance herewith proposes some actions with which the European level could support local authorities in developing and implementing ambitious Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP). These actions would in return help achieving the overall European target to reduce GHG emissions by at least 60% by 2050 in the transport sector.

The strategy: European regulation to support local strategies

Despite these ambitious reduction targets, the transport sector is the only sector with a clear increase in emissions. This is also the case at local level – in most cities and especially smaller municipalities – mainly as a consequence of short sighted urban planning, lack of means to promote public transport and diverse mobility patterns in commuting and leisure. This increase in the transport sector eats up the successes in mitigating emissions in the energy sector.

Nevertheless, some cities are achieving reductions in the traffic volume. They massively promote walking and cycling and make considerable investments in ensuring an attractive public transport system. However, unpopular decisions like parking or access restrictions are not widely used as they have already resulted in business re-localisation or have even determined outcomes of elections. All transport planners are aware of the push-and-pull principle, but in practice the push measures are clearly under-represented. A European support for such measures would help to reduce competition between neighbouring cities and increase courage for their implementation, in line with the local conditions. The following paragraphs provide some proposals on the support needed.

Need to overcome the current inconsistency of objectives

The Europe 2020 Strategy highlights the importance of an *efficient and effective transport system* for the future development of the European Union. Europeans should have *access to mobility and transport services*. These services should support a *smooth functioning of the internal market*, and *minimise any burdens on the free movement of goods and people* in the EU. On the other hand, the European transport system *has to become more sustainable*. We need to *break the current*

dependency on fossil fuels and to reduce the negative impacts of transport on citizens' health and well-being, the climate and the environment.

Even with advancing vehicle technology and development of public transport systems, these objectives remain conflicting. At a certain point, the European Union will have to start a debate about the feasibility of such objectives, about their inherent contradiction and to which of them will have the priority in the end. Only eight years are left until 2020!

1. Local strategies for better and more sustainable urban mobility – and the plans that underpin them

In transport and in urban transport, the discussions are often concentrating on technical solutions to reduce emissions of transport. However, the key issue – how to **reduce the transport needs and the transport distances** – is not really tackled. For this purpose, it is crucial to develop **integrated strategies**, which take urban planning at the first place, but also energy, economy, education, social aspects or environment into account. Innovative design of work flows and procedures with the help of ICT will be a cornerstone of any strategy tackling with mobility.

In the framework of the **Covenant of Mayors** initiative, local authorities commit to reduce their CO₂ emissions by at least 20 % until 2020. In order to demonstrate how they want to reach this target they have to prepare a **Sustainable Energy Action Plan** (SEAP). Even with transport being the sector which still accounts for an increase in GHG emissions, some – especially smaller – municipalities do not include the transport sector in their action plans. More guidance on how to better integrate transport into the SEAPs would therefore be helpful. Examples, which highlight feasible transport related measures both reducing transport needs and technical measures should be showcased and mobility planning closely linked with SEAPs or Climate Plans should be encouraged.

Any support from the EU in terms of promoting best practice, providing recommendations and training or even financial incentives would be helpful at a first stage. A mandatory development of SUMP would in our view be counterproductive, at least under current conditions with EU regulation not necessarily de-motivating car use (such as minimum taxation of fuels), see 'inconsistency of objectives' above.

2. Access restrictions and urban pricing schemes

Most cities consider access restrictions and urban pricing schemes as the instrument contributing most to reduce congestion and improve quality of life in city areas. The direct positive impacts like better air quality or less noise will certainly vary significantly from scheme to scheme, while **making drivers rethink their daily choice** of transport mode will be the main effect.

EU support should seek to come to **harmonised standards and legislation at national level** throughout Europe, an **exchange among experts** on the factors of success and impacts of the schemes in place and deriving **recommendations** from these experiences for further dissemination. An important aspect of harmonisation will also be the setting of **standards for vehicle identification and technical interoperability**. As a consequence of access restrictions, a full range of **new mobility services** will arise. EU support could help to spread these approaches quickly in order to avoid the waste of technical and financial capacities.

3. Financial support for urban transport projects

The precondition for introducing access restrictions or similar schemes is the **existence of alternatives**, meaning massive investments in public transport systems and cycling infrastructure as well as the introduction of mobility management schemes. For example in Nantes, the magnitude of funds needed to extend their public transport network represents some 40 % of the overall budget of the city!

Considerable amounts of funding is needed both for investments of the public transport systems but also for the maintenance of these systems. It is therefore of utmost importance to **redirect funding for transport infrastructure** from road traffic to sustainable modes of transport, both at EU and national levels. Financing instruments such as the Connecting Europe Facility should concentrate on funding sustainable urban transport systems - also locally. Long term and consistent action also requires long term funding, and here carbon finance could provide an option (for example using ETS revenues as a source of funding for consistent work and coherent local strategies, which reduce GHG emissions).

Congestion Charging schemes could also function as a source for financing urban transport projects. A fundamental condition for increasing acceptance of urban pricing schemes should be to constrain the use of their revenues to finance sustainable urban transport measures and projects, which promote walking, cycling and public transport.

When designing the smart cities of tomorrow, energy, housing and mobility will need to be even more intertwined. In contrast to the current design of the **Smart Cities and Communities Initiative**, cities should therefore be at the centre of planning and implementing innovative actions and leading this process. Innovation in transport will have to find – even more than in the energy sector – the acceptance and active involvement of citizens. Industry will have to act as a product or service provider, which includes the adaptation of technologies to the needs of the transport users in the course of the project.

4. Other issues

Less speed means less emissions and accidents

The current **European Citizens' Initiative "30km/h – making the streets liveable"** proposes that an EU-wide default speed limit of 30km/h in urban areas, unless local authorities set other speed limits for certain sections. Such a scheme is simple, effective and inexpensive. Past experiences with a speed limit of 30km/h have shown that the number and severity of accidents as well as noise and exhaust pollution decrease. Climate Alliance and 40 other organisations support the initiative and call for signing the public petition.

EU legal framework for vehicles

The EU is the only level which can regulate standards for vehicles, a substantial element in making transport more sustainable. As a first step, **stronger emission standards** need to be set in order to improve air quality in cities and reduce carbon emissions.¹

¹ During the 19th International Annual Conference and General Assembly of Climate Alliance-Munich 2011, a resolution has been launched on [Electric Mobility](#)

And finally: Awareness Raising Campaigns still have their raison d'être

Still today, campaigns that raise awareness and invite to taste sustainable transport modes are needed. The European Mobility Week is today a fix event marked in the agenda of many cities. Another example of ever growing success is Climate Alliance's Cycling City Councillors campaign, which invites city councillors – together with teams of citizens – to experience cyclists' daily life in all facets, from benefits of cycling to dangerous spots with need of infrastructure improvement (www.stadtradeln.de). Such campaigns are very cost-efficient in terms of outreach, engagement of local stakeholders and involvement of citizens. EU support for implementing such campaigns in as much as possible places in Europe could accompany and amplify the effects of all measures envisaged by this consultation.

Climate Alliance, on behalf of its 1,700 member cities and municipalities, hopes that these proposals, based on the policies, experiences and recommendations from the members, will contribute to the design of ambitious EU initiatives on sustainable urban mobility. The transport sector is the one which requires most coherence of action on all levels of government. Climate Alliance members will be happy to contribute to the achievement of the EU's emission targets 2020 and 2050.

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