



## TOWARDS A NEW CULTURE FOR **URBAN MOBILITY**

Cities are at the heart of European life and are the engine of the European economy. The vast majority of European citizens' lives in urban areas, and around 85% of the European Union's (EU's) Gross National Product is generated there. Sustainable urban mobility - allowing people and goods to move freely and safely while respecting the environment – is crucial both for our quality of life and for the health of the economy.

Yet towns and cities across Europe are facing a range of serious challenges such as traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, air and noise pollution, health issues, safety risks and security threats. These are common challenges and their effects can often be felt across national boundaries. They have to be tackled at European level if we are to achieve a sustainable urban mobility for all European citizens. In most cases, local authorities are best equipped to take action, but the EU can enable and encourage common solutions for the development of a new culture for urban mobility in Europe.

### Launching a debate

It is in this context that the European Commission published on 25 September 2007 a Green Paper called "Towards a new culture for urban mobility". This followed a six-month long consultation with stakeholders. Based on their input, the Green Paper poses questions and launches a wide-ranging public debate with a view to developing a European policy vision on urban mobility. The Green Paper identifies a number of core elements of sustainable urban mobility, namely the need to make towns and cities and their transport systems more fluid, greener, 'smarter', more accessible, and safer.



#### HOW TO IMPROVE URBAN MOBILITY: SOME OF THE KEY QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE GREEN PAPER

- How can sustainable modes of transport be promoted?
- How can the use of clean transport technologies be encouraged?
- What services and systems can be developed to better inform European travellers?
- Is there a need for a European charter on passenger rights in public transport?
- What can be done to improve passenger safety and security?

# Making our towns and cities...

## ... more fluid

The growing amount of traffic in cities causes congestion that affects both passenger and freight transport. This has negative economic, social and environmental impacts, costing the EU 1% of its Gross Domestic Product every year. In order to ease traffic congestion in cities, alternatives to private car use - such as walking and cycling, collective transport or the use of the motorbike or scooter - must be attractive and safe. Good connections between different modes of transport, good parking facilities outside city centres, road charging or parking pricing schemes, better traffic management and information, car-pooling and car-sharing, and efficient freight transport may also have a role to play.

**CHANGE IS POSSIBLE\*:  
FREIGHT CONSOLIDATION IN BRISTOL**  
In Bristol, UK, freight distribution has been improved by means of a commercial vehicle driver's route atlas and an urban freight consolidation scheme. The scheme, involving over 50 retailers, has reduced vehicle movements by 70% and has saved over 100 000 'lorry kilometres'.

## ... greener

Urban traffic generates significant amounts of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, air pollutants and noise, and this affects the environment and people's health. Options for making cities more environment-friendly include the development of clean, energy efficient transport technologies, as well as urban 'green zones' with features like pedestrianised areas, restricted access and speed limits. Energy-efficient driving and green procurement can also help to tackle this challenge.

**CHANGE IS POSSIBLE:  
MODERNISATION IN BUCHAREST**  
The local public transport operator in Bucharest, Romania, has been working hard to modernise its fleet by replacing polluting buses and by introducing new energy efficient trams and trolley buses. Bucharest is also investing in the modernisation of its tram, trolley bus and metro networks.

\* All examples are drawn from "CIVITAS in Europe - A proven framework for progress in urban mobility", January 2007. For further details and for other urban mobility case studies, see:

[http://www.civitas-initiative.org/docs1/CIVITAS\\_D8\\_Final.pdf](http://www.civitas-initiative.org/docs1/CIVITAS_D8_Final.pdf)



## ... smarter

European cities are facing a constant increase in freight and passenger transport movements, while the potential to develop the necessary infrastructure is limited by a lack of space and environmental constraints. However, more 'intelligent' urban transport can help. Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and good traffic management can help to increase efficiency. 'Smart' charging, intelligent public transport ticketing and better traveller information may be part of the solution.

### CHANGE IS POSSIBLE:

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN KAUNAS

The city of Kaunas, in Lithuania, has put improved public transport at the heart of its mobility strategy and has made a major effort to develop a new intelligent transport management system. The city's public transport programme contains a wide range of measures that help to attract new public transport customers.

## ... safer

People should be able to move around cities at minimum personal risk. But there are still far too many road accidents in urban areas. This situation must be addressed by looking at issues related to people's behaviour, the vehicles and the infrastructure. Strict enforcement of traffic rules is imperative. Meanwhile, if people do not feel safe, they may refrain from using collective transport, leading to unnecessary car use. At the same time, urban transport systems have to be as secure as possible in the face of any terrorist threat.

### CHANGE IS POSSIBLE:

#### CYCLING IN GRAZ

Graz, in Austria, is known for its groundbreaking work on introducing bio-diesel in its public transport fleet, but that is not all. The city's experience shows that a well planned, long-term approach to increasing safety for cyclists, as part of a wider cycling strategy, can increase the share of cycling and result in a more attractive city.

## ... more accessible

Another challenge is to make urban transport more accessible for all. Society is changing, and getting older, and expects mobility solutions that are flexible, affordable and comfortable. Citizens want seamless, safe and efficient transport both for freight and passengers. This calls for good inter-connections between transport modes and for good links between urban and suburban transport, such as by providing 'park and ride' sites outside cities.

### CHANGE IS POSSIBLE:

#### BETTER ACCESS IN BREMEN

The public transport operator in Bremen, Germany, has implemented an innovative smartcard ticketing scheme to improve access to public transport for people who are not familiar with the network, schedules and fares. Car-sharing and new clean hybrid buses also form part of the city's integrated mobility offer.

## Changing behaviour

Addressing the above challenges means changing our behaviour - creating a new urban mobility culture in Europe, involving citizens, decision-makers and other stakeholders. The task now is to discuss how this can be achieved and what could be the added value of activities at European level, with a view to drawing up a concrete plan of action. Various tools can be envisaged for bringing about the necessary changes...



## Rising to the challenge – the tools

So how can the new culture for urban mobility be developed? Improving statistics and data collection as a basis for decision – making is one avenue – with the Green Paper raising the idea of a European urban mobility 'observatory'. Other activities, such as education, training and awareness-raising could help to change behaviour. Meanwhile, the problem of appropriate investment in and financing of urban transport needs to be addressed.

## EU added-value

The European Commission is not aiming to impose specific solutions, but rather wants to facilitate change at local, regional and national level. Indeed, the Commission could add value to urban mobility initiatives in such a facilitating role via, for example, enabling exchange of knowledge and best practice; harmonisation and simplification of legislation; setting standards and facilitating interoperability; offering guidance and raising awareness; and providing EU funding (one source is the CIVITAS scheme – see box).

The key to success will be cooperation between stakeholders at different levels - local, regional, national, and EU. Better coordination and an integrated approach between policy sectors is also needed if win-win solutions are to be found, such as between urban transport and health or land use policy.

### PROMOTING CLEAN URBAN TRANSPORT: CIVITAS

CIVITAS is an EU initiative that helps cities to test integrated actions for sustainable, clean and energy-efficient urban transport. The Green Paper notes that the CIVITAS approach could in the longer term pave the way for targeted EU support for financing clean urban transport activities.



## Have your say!

The European Commission is now inviting all interested parties to take part in a new consultation on urban mobility that will be open until **15 March 2008**. A concrete Action Plan will then be drawn up and published by early autumn 2008. The Action Plan will include possible actions at the EU, national, regional, and local levels and at the level of the industry and citizens.

### Together we must find ways to improve urban mobility:

a sustainable mobility that benefits all Europeans.

Make sure that you have your say.



### YOU CAN PUT FORWARD YOUR VIEWS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

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- by post to: **European Commission**  
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